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P. 47

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"Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. 'What if Christmas,' he thought, 'doesn't come from a store? What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more?'"

–DR. SEUSS // AUTHOR

sweet celebrations

This issue is packed with goodies for holiday giving and indulging!

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"Real food from real home cooks"

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TOH FIELD EDITOR

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FOOD STYLIST
Suzanne Breckenridge

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'Tis the season
for holiday treats

Find all your favorite holiday treats at **tasteofhome.com/christmas**. From festive cookies to sweet candies, there's a recipe for every good little girl and boy, plus plenty of appetizers and main dishes for your holiday feast, too!

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Nice 'n' Soft Sugar Cookies

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THE SWEETEST TIME OF YEAR

I have a sweet tooth, I cannot lie. And at no time does it act up more than during the holiday season. That's probably because when I was growing up, from Halloween until well past Christmas Day, our house was chock-full of candy and cookies, cakes and pies, muffins and brownies.

The most memorable treat? My mom's spritz Christmas cookies. She pulled out the cookie press just once a year, and we kids could hardly contain our excitement when asked to "help" by sprinkling the finished spritz with sugar and jimmies (and eating dough when she turned her back). Also memorable: her creamy fudge...and her fruitcake. That dark, gummy, un-cake-like confection with its fairly glowing little candied fruits. I hated it, and so did my sisters and brother. But my dad loved it, so Mom made a giant one every year. (My mother really is a fabulous baker and makes some of my favorite desserts. She deals with our fruitcake jokes with great humor.)

Then there were Dr. Mukomela's caramels. Art Mukomela (pronounced myoo-ko-mella); his wife, Sheila; and their brood of five children lived across the street from us in Southern California in the early '70s. Our families were close; we kids played ball in the street, traded Barbies, built forts and generally horsed around, and my mom and Sheila were BFFs. A pathologist by trade, Art was also an amazing cook. Every Christmas, he made these incredible caramels and gave all his neighbors a tin of them. Wrapped in little squares of wax paper, they were soft, sweet and buttery-rich. Not sure whether "heavenly" or "sinful" describes them best. My mouth is watering at the memory!

Did I get your mouth watering, too? If you've got a sweet tooth like me, or just love making sweets for family and friends, you'll *love* this issue! It's filled with all manner of treats from readers like you that are perfect for holiday gatherings and gifting--12 scrumptious winners of our "Cakes & Tortes" contest, our staff's favorite Christmas cookie recipes, delightful candies, easy-to-make marshmallows (you haven't lived until you've tasted one of these), pies, sweet breads and more. Find the entire lineup on page 4, then visit tasteofhome.com for even more wonderful recipes for holiday treats.

Speaking of gifts, if you have cooks on your list, don't forget about our big, beautiful *Taste of Home Cookbook, Cooks Who Care Edition*. Over 1,300 recipes and 1,300 color photos, tons of tips and how-to's, plus 21 inspiring stories from home cooks who use their passion for cooking to help those in need. Find it everywhere books are sold or at tasteofhome.com. A fitting gift for this season of giving...and giving back.

Sweet holidays to you and yours!

Catherine

Catherine Cassidy
Editor in Chief

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR SUBSCRIPTION? Write to *Taste of Home* customer service, P.O. Box 5294, Harlan IA 51593-0794; call 1-800/344-6913 or E-mail *rpsubscustomercare@custhelp.com*

FIELD EDITOR SPOTLIGHT

Taste of Home's enthusiastic team of volunteer editors from across the U.S. and Canada share recipes, cooking tips and more with our staff and on-line community.

Take a look at the complete list of Field Editors on page 80, maybe one of them lives in your neighborhood!

CHRISTINA CALVINO // ORLAND PARK, IL

FAMILY STATS: Single. Christina maintains a food blog (dinneratchristinas.com).

"I come from an Italian family that loves to cook. When I was growing up, my dad made dinner most nights, and we always ate as a family.

"My brother is a chef in California, and I saw how his love of food brought people together. That inspired me to start my blog. When I cook dinner for my boyfriend and me, I photograph the outcome and share the recipes on my blog.

I also love to read, write and watch movies. I enjoy walking my dog, too—it helps clear my head and keep the extra dessert pounds at bay!"

JUDITH McGHAN // PERRY HALL, MD

FAMILY STATS: Husband Tom, retired; two adult children, Thomas and Cathy. Judith works in the construction industry.

"I grew up in the Allegheny National Forest reserve, learning to cook from my mother, who learned from her Swedish immigrant mother. I have photos of me rolling out pie dough at age 3!

"I enjoy gardening in the spring and summer...even fall, when I harvest green beans, tomatoes and peas. I participate in church bake sales and potluck dinners on a regular basis, and I make a mean taco salad and Swedish meatballs."

SARAH SANVILLE // TROY, NH

FAMILY STATS: Husband Jim, a mechanical engineer. Sarah is a registered respiratory therapist.

"I've loved to cook since I was a young girl. My mother and grandmother always let me help in the kitchen, and I know they're the ones who fostered that love. So when I first got married, I could invite my family and friends over for dinner, and the food would turn out great! It's over these meals that memories are made.

"In my spare time, I like to garden, scrapbook, play piano and flute, snowboard and take photos. I'm even starting a photo business on the side."

SUSAN STETZEL // GAINESVILLE, NY

FAMILY STATS: Husband Greg; four children, Erin, 24; Matthew, 21; Joe, 18; and Danny, 9. Susan and her husband own a diesel repair business.

"Every day is an adventure in the kitchen; I'm always looking to improve the things I cook and make them healthier. When that happens—and it tastes good—that's a triumph!

"I enjoy spending time with my family, volunteering at my youngest son's school and challenging myself with new crafts. My friends have dragged me into quilting, and now I'm hooked!"

JOIN OUR TEAM! » Love to cook? Love *Taste of Home*? You might be interested in becoming one of our volunteer Field Editors. If you would like to be considered, please fill out the short application form at **www.tasteofhome.com/apply**

DEAR JANE...

Like many families, we have our own holiday traditions. Our ancestry is Polish, so before dinner, my father distributes a piece of *Oplatki* (a Christmas wafer) to each family member. We each, in turn, offer a piece to our families with a Christmas greeting. This custom symbolizes charity, unity and friendship.

Mom prepares a wonderful buffet, and what a spread! After dinner we sing carols, ending with *Happy Birthday to Jesus*, as one of the children places the baby in the manger. The gift exchange starts with Mom and Dad ringing a hand-held bell, a tradition from my dad's family. We each ring the bell as we hand out our gifts. The evening ends with a White Elephant exchange. A fun time for all!

NO BROWN SUGAR?

Jane Stasik, Editorial Assistant

Rick Dern of Sheboygan, WI wants to know what he can substitute when there's none at hand. It's simple: For each 1 cup of firmly packed light brown sugar, substitute 1-1/2 tablespoons molasses plus 1 cup granulated sugar. For dark brown sugar, use 1/4 cup molasses and 1 cup granulated sugar.

Got a question? Write to me at DearJane@tasteofhome.com.

May you have a blessed and prosperous new year!

TASTE-Y POTLUCK

My parents, brothers and I with our families had a *Taste of Home* party in June, and it was so much fun. There were 17 of us, and each family brought dishes made from the TOH magazines or TOH on-line. Some of the children even contributed dishes. This was a wonderful idea we got from your magazine—and we plan to do it again!

—Carrie O'Kelley
MANNFORD, OK

COOKING SCHOOL REPORT CARD

I attended a Taste of Home Cooking School show in Waverly, IA. It was a really wonderful evening, with great recipes and just a fun time. Our host, Kit Hoover, did a great job in his presentation. He made it look so easy to prepare the recipes and had us laughing throughout the night. I receive *Taste of Home* and know I'll also enjoy the recipe magazine in the Cooking School gift bag.

Keep up the good work. I hope to attend another show in the future.

—Janet Platter
WAVERLY, IA

LOVE LETTER!

Each issue, one lucky reader will receive a TOH apron for sending in our favorite "love" letter of the month. Jessica, your apron is on its way!

LATTICE LESSON

Thanks for the "Lattice Lesson" in the Aug/Sept '09 issue! I've always wanted to make a pie with a pretty lattice top, but figured it would be too complicated. I was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to make! Here is a picture of my husband, Royall, with the finished product.

—Jessica Spence
MESA, AZ

DUTCH OVEN WINNER

I had just seen the Cinnamon Biscuit Peach Cobbler recipe in TOH Sept/Oct '09 before a friend told me about a Dutch oven contest at the North Idaho Fair. I adapted the recipe and won first prize for desserts!

It was quite an experience! We had to cook over briquettes in a 10-ft.-square area. Several teams were really equipped. We'd brought an umbrella for the sun, but it wasn't enough to keep the rain off where I'd be preparing the dough. One of the other contestants was nice enough to loan us his extra tent.

I just knew the cobbler was going to catch the judges' eyes. You can see from the photo (below) how nice it came out. It tasted as good as it looked.

—Patricia Franks
VALLEYFORD, WA

ENTER OUR HIDE & SEEK CONTEST

Get sweet rewards if you find this tasty piece of cake on the pages of this issue. You could win a $50 gift certificate to **Shop Taste of Home.**

Go to **tasteofhome.com** to enter; 100 winners will be drawn from entries with the correct answer. Or mail a postcard with the page number and your name, address and phone number to Hide & Seek, *Taste of Home*, 5400 S. 60th St., Greendale, WI 53129. Winners are drawn at random.

THE BLACK CAT WAS HIDDEN ON PAGE 44 IN OUR OCTOBER/NOVEMBER '09 ISSUE.

advertisement

CELEBRATE THE SEASON

with the versatile flavor of Ocean Spray® Cranberries

"Ocean Spray® cranberries spark your holiday menu with the ultimate in festive flavor for every dish from sweet to savory. And their rich red color adds a vibrant touch to your holiday entertaining. Celebrate the best of the season with these great recipes."

Join us on a hunt through this issue to find more Ocean Spray® inspired holiday recipes.

Baked Brie with Cranberry Tapenade and Walnut Toast

TYLER FLORENCE signature recipe

INGREDIENTS

1 10-inch wheel of brie
6-8 slices of walnut bread, toasted
10-12 Ocean Spray® Fresh Cranberries*

Cranberry tapenade:

1 cup Ocean Spray® Craisins® Original Dried Cranberries
1 tablespoon light brown sugar
Juice of half lemon
Extra-virgin olive oil
1 small onion, sliced
Pinch grated nutmeg
1 cup pitted kalamata olives
1/8 teaspoon grated orange zest
2 teaspoons red-wine vinegar
1/4 cup picked, flat-parsley leaves
2 tablespoons button capers in brine
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves with buds

DIRECTIONS

In a mixing bowl, add dried cranberries, brown sugar and lemon juice. Cover with boiling water and wrap bowl in plastic. Set aside and allow the cranberries to re-hydrate.

Preheat oven to 450°F. In a sauté pan over medium heat, cook onions with a little olive oil and salt and pepper until nicely caramelized, about 7-8 minutes. Cool and set aside in a large mixing bowl. In a food processor, combine remaining ingredients and process into a chunky purée. Pour into the bowl with onions. Drain cranberries, roughly chop before folding into the large bowl. Stir well and add a drizzle of olive oil.

Rub parchment paper with oil and place on a cookie sheet. Place brie on top and bake for 8-9 minutes until cheese is just melted—do not overbake. Remove from oven and slide onto a flat dish. Top with tapenade and rinsed fresh cranberries. Serve with toasted walnut bread.

Makes 4 servings

* Wash thoroughly before using.

For even more ways to enjoy cranberries, visit www.OCEANSPRAY.COM

Roast Beef Tenderloin with Cranberry-Red Wine Sauce

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 2-pound center-cut beef tenderloin
Salt and pepper
3 tablespoons butter
1/3 cup minced shallots
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 cup red wine
1 cup Ocean Spray® 100% Juice Cranberry Juice Blend
3/4 cup beef broth
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 425°F. Spray small rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. Heat oil in large wide skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add beef and cook 4 to 6 minutes or until browned on all sides, reducing heat to medium if necessary. Place beef on baking sheet; season beef with salt and pepper. Reserve skillet.

Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until internal thermometer reaches 132 to 135 degrees for medium-rare. Let stand loosely covered 10 minutes before slicing. Slice and place on a platter.

Meanwhile, add 1 tablespoon of the butter to reserved skillet and melt over medium heat. Add shallots and cook 1 minute. Add garlic and cook 20 seconds. Add wine and increase heat to high. Add cranberry juice blend, beef broth and thyme and boil 10 to 15 minutes or until slightly thickened. Reduce heat to medium and whisk in remaining 2 tablespoons butter; strain. Spoon over beef before serving.

Makes 6 servings

For even more ways to enjoy cranberries, visit www.OCEANSPRAY.COM

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Ocean Spray

WITH ALL THE WAYS TO ENJOY CRANBERRIES,

you're going to need a bigger recipe box.

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Cranberry Festive Sparkler

INGREDIENTS

8 ounces Ocean Spray® Cranberry Juice Drink, any flavor, chilled
2 ounces sparkling water
Lime wedge, garnish

DIRECTIONS

Fill a tall glass with ice. Add cranberry juice drink. Top with sparkling water. Garnish with a lime wedge.

Makes 1 serving.

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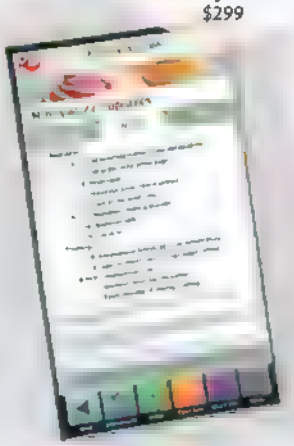

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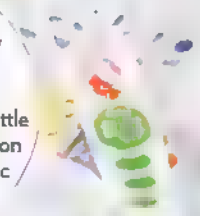


CRAFTY
Adorable, personalized stamps from PSA Essentials are perfect for crafty notes and recipe cards. Peel & Stick design makes for compact storage and easy switching between patterns.
stamp $40

GOURMET
A gift card tucks neatly into a stocking and gives the chef on your list an excuse to splurge at a local specialty shop. If you're lucky, you'll be rewarded with a taste of something delicious!

Want these products? Go to **tasteofhome.com/links**

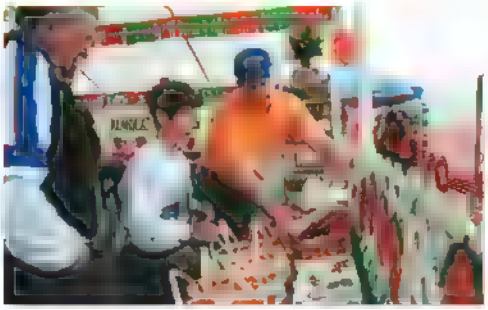
KUMQUATS RULE!

GREAT FIND

Kumquat Festival
DADE CITY FL

check it out:

* The 1-day festival consumes over 120 bushels of kumquats. That's 5,400 pounds!
* Can't miss! Everyone comes for the kumquat pie. About 8,000 slices are sold.
* Kumquats are in season from November through March.
* Don't leave without a bag of the tiny citrus fruits. One dollar will get you 25-30 kumquats.



Not everywhere, of course, but they sure do at the Dade City, FL Kumquat Festival, which attracts about 35,000 people each year. Mark your calendars for Jan. 30, 2010, and you can taste these fresh golden gems, sample them in a variety of recipes, view crafts, take a wagon ride and meet the winner of the Kumquat Pageant. "It's sure to be an eye-opener for many cooks on how to use this citrus fruit," notes Field Editor Henrietta Brumbaugh of Hiawassee, GA, who loves the festival's popular Kumquat Refrigerator Pie.

For the pie recipe and details about the Kumquat Festival, visit **tasteofhome.com/links**

tastes like christmas

Traditions to tempt your taste buds

CHRISTMAS PICKLE
Though its origin is uncertain, the Christmas pickle is a hit with kids. Parents hide a pickle-shaped ornament on the tree, and on Christmas morning, the first one to find it "wins" an extra present. It's supposed to bring good luck.

ORANGE IN THE STOCKING
This one dates back to the 1800s, when oranges were considered an exotic treat. Today many families still use the orange as part of their holiday celebration.

MARZIPAN PIG
Scandinavians award a marzipan pig, the traditional "almond present," to the family member who finds the whole almond in their holiday rice pudding.

The worst gift is a fruitcake. There is only one fruitcake in the entire world, and people keep sending it to each other.
– Johnny Carson

WINTER FOOD FESTS!

HOLIDAY ALE FESTIVAL
Portland, OR
December 2-6, 2009

5TH ANNUAL FLORIDA KEYS SEAFOOD FESTIVAL
Key West, FL
January 16, 2010

36TH ANNUAL SANTA CRUZ FUNGUS FAIR
Santa Cruz, CA
January 9-10, 2010

YUMA LETTUCE DAYS
Yuma, AZ
January 22-24, 2010

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Store your bubbly on its side in a cool, dark place—not in the fridge. Just chill before serving.
The better the champagne, the longer you can store it.

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Puff Pastry Wrapped Brie
1 sheet Pepperidge Farm Puff Pastry Sheets, thawed
1 Brie cheese round (8 oz.)
1 egg
1 Heat oven to 400°F. Unfold pastry on floured surface. Place cheese in center. Fold pastry over cheese to cover. Trim excess pastry and press to seal. Reserve scraps for decoration, if desired.
2 Beat egg with 1 tbsp. water. Brush seam of pastry with egg mixture. Place seam side down onto baking sheet. Brush with egg mixture.
3 Bake 25 min. or until golden brown. Let stand 20 min. Serves 8.

Easy as 1, 2, 3.

Gone in 4, 5, 6.

For inspiring add-in ideas, recipes and videos, visit **PUFFPASTRY.COM**

PUFF PASTRY SHEETS, SHELLS & READY-TO-BAKE TURNOVERS.

PEPPERIDGE FARM

Look for Puff Pastry in the freezer aisle

GOOD IS IN THE DETAILS.™

OPEN HOUSE

BRIGHT IDEAS FOR WELCOMING FRIENDS & FAMILY INTO YOUR HOME

Susan Davidson
ELM GROVE, WI

HOME SWEET HOME

Bring on the candy for a holiday house decorating party!

Making candy houses is a Christmas tradition I've shared with family, friends and students (I'm an elementary school art teacher) for 25 years. Last season, I put my cookie exchange friends to the task.

I asked them to bring peppermints, gumdrops, candy canes, ribbon candy, cereal, pretzels and whatever else to add to my stash of trims.

The project is simple. You can cut the house pattern out of cardboard boxes, hot glue the pieces together and hot glue the house on an upside-down, thick paper plate. Or you can use a small milk carton as the house, like I do for my kindergarten students.

Frosting is used to cover the house and adhere the candy. Cereals, cookies and crackers become roofs, doors and windows. Small pretzel knots are used for fences, an upside-down ice cream cone makes a great tree—the ideas are endless. You really start to look at candy differently.

One thing is certain—you'll have lots of fun making candy houses!

For Susan's frosting recipe, house pattern and more, visit **tasteofhome.com/plus**

HOT BITES

These savory tidbits start any party off right!

crab puffs

"This recipe's from my grandmother, who told me to have fun being creative and experimenting in the kitchen."

Jean Bevilacqua // RHODODENDRON, OR

PREP: 45 MIN. BAKE: 20 MIN./BATCH
YIELD: 8 DOZEN

1 cup water
1/2 cup butter, cubed
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup all-purpose flour
4 eggs

FILLING
4 hard-cooked eggs, finely chopped
1 can (6 oz.) lump crabmeat, drained
4 oz. cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup mayonnaise
2 Tbsp. finely chopped onion

For more great appetizer recipes, visit tasteofhome.com/appetizers

2 Tbsp. prepared horseradish, drained

Minced fresh parsley, optional

In a large saucepan,bring the water, butter and salt to a boil. Add flour all at once and stir until a smooth ball forms. Remove from the heat; let stand for 5 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Continue beating until mixture is smooth and shiny.

Drop by teaspoonfuls 2 in. apart onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 400° for 18-22 minutes or until golden brown. Remove to a wire rack. Immediately split puffs open, remove tops and set aside. Discard soft dough from inside. Cool puffs.

In a large bowl, combine the filling ingredients. Just before serving, spoon 1 teaspoonful filling into each puff; sprinkle with parsley if desired. Replace tops.

onion, garlic & brie bruschetta

This rich, sweet combination will add color and wildly delicious flavor to your appetizer buffet.

Carole Bess White // PORTLAND, OR

PREP: 45 MIN. BROIL: 5 MIN./BATCH
YIELD: 3-1/2 DOZEN

2 whole garlic bulbs

3 Tbsp. olive oil, divided

1 large red onion, halved and thinly sliced

4-1/2 tsp. sugar

1 tsp. balsamic vinegar

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. pepper

1 French bread baguette (10-1/2 oz.), cut into scant 1/2-in. slices

1 lb. Brie cheese, rind removed, thinly sliced

Minced fresh thyme, optional

Remove papery outer skin from garlic (do not peel or separate cloves). Cut tops off of garlic bulbs. Brush with 1 Tbsp. oil. Wrap each bulb in heavy-duty foil. Bake at 425° for 30-35 minutes or until softened. Cool for 10-15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium heat, cook and stir the onion, sugar, vinegar, salt and pepper in remaining oil for 15-20 minutes or until very tender and browned.

Place bread on ungreased baking sheets. Broil 3-4 in. from the heat for 3-4 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Squeeze softened garlic into a bowl, mash with a fork. Spread over toast. Top with cheese and onion. Broil 3-4 in. from the heat for 2-3 minutes or until cheese is melted. Sprinkle with thyme if desired.

smoked gouda & bacon potatoes

Cheryl Perry // HERTFORD, NC

PREP: 50 MIN. BAKE: 10 MIN.
YIELD: 2-1/2 DOZEN (2 CUPS SAUCE)

2 whole garlic bulbs

1 Tbsp. olive oil

15 small red potatoes, halved

15 bacon strips

2 cups (8 oz.) shredded smoked Gouda cheese

1 tsp. coarsely ground pepper

2 cups creme fraiche or sour cream

1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves

Remove papery outer skin from garlic (do not peel or separate cloves). Cut tops off of garlic bulbs. Brush with oil. Wrap each bulb in heavy-duty foil. Bake at 425° for 30-35 minutes or until softened. Cool for 10-15 minutes.

Meanwhile, place potatoes in a large saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 8-10 minutes or just until tender. Cut bacon strips in half widthwise. In a large skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until partially cooked but not crisp. Remove to paper towels to drain, keep warm.

Place a tablespoonful of cheese on the cut side of a potato half. Wrap with a half-strip of bacon and secure with a toothpick. Place on an ungreased baking sheet. Repeat. Sprinkle appetizers with pepper. Bake at 375° for 10-15 minutes or until bacon is crisp.

For sauce, squeeze softened garlic into a food processor. Add creme fraiche and cilantro; cover and process until blended. Serve with potatoes.

"You might need a fork to eat these hearty gouda and bacon potatoes. Creme fraiche makes them absolutely irresistible."

— Cheryl Perry

Chef Tyler Florence

"Ocean Spray® Cranberry Sauce makes this simple crowd-pleaser the star of your holiday buffet."

Ultimate Party Meatballs

INGREDIENTS

1 14-ounce can Ocean Spray® Jellied Cranberry Sauce
1 12-ounce bottle Heinz® Chili Sauce
1 2-pound bag frozen, pre-cooked, cocktail-size meatballs

DIRECTIONS

Combine sauces in a large saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring until smooth. Add meatballs. Cover and cook for 15 minutes or until meatballs are heated through, stirring occasionally.

Makes 30 appetizer servings

Slow Cooker Preparation: Place meatballs in a slow cooker. Combine sauces and pour over meatballs. Cover and cook 4 hours on HIGH.

Ultimate Party MEATBALLS

For even more ways to enjoy cranberries, visit www.OCEANSPRAY.COM

RING IT IN!

They'll toast you warmly when you serve party guests this spectacular New Year's spread

fiesta shrimp cocktail

"Impress your guests by serving this appetizer in a martini glass or other fancy stemware. I make this every time I have a dinner party, and it's always a big hit."

Linda Stemen // MONROEVILLE, IN

PREP: 20 MIN. + CHILLING
YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

1 lb. cooked medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 medium tomato, chopped
1/2 cup Italian salad dressing
1 can (4 oz.) chopped green chilies
3 green onions, thinly sliced
2 tsp. honey
1/8 tsp. hot pepper sauce
2 Tbsp. minced fresh cilantro
Romaine leaves

In a large bowl, combine the first eight ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Arrange romaine in eight cocktail glasses or serving dishes. Using a slotted spoon, add about 1/2 cup shrimp mixture to each.

perfect winter salad

"This salad is also delicious as an entree with grilled chicken breast. In fact, it's so good, it could be dessert!"

DeNae Shewmake // BURNSVILLE, MN

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 25 MIN.
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS (1 CUP EACH)

1/4 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
1/4 cup maple syrup
3 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
2 Tbsp. minced shallot
2 tsp. sugar
1/2 cup canola oil
2 pkg. (5 oz. each) spring mix salad greens
2 medium tart apples, thinly sliced
1 cup dried cherries
1 cup pecan halves
1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion

In a small bowl, combine the first five ingredients; whisk in oil. Chill until serving.

In a salad bowl, combine the salad greens, apples, cherries, pecans and onion. Just before serving, drizzle with dressing and toss to coat.

tenderloin with cremini-apricot stuffing

Simple but special, this flavorful beef will get rave reviews.

Marie Rizzio // INTERLOCHEN, MI

PREP: 35 MIN.
BAKE: 35 MIN. + STANDING
YIELD: 10 SERVINGS

1 cup sliced baby portobello (cremini) mushrooms
1/3 cup chopped onion
1/3 cup chopped celery
2 Tbsp. butter
1/2 cup chopped dried apricots
1 Tbsp. minced fresh rosemary
1 beef tenderloin roast (2-1/2 lbs.)
1 Tbsp. olive oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

In a large skillet, saute the mushrooms, onion and celery in butter until tender. Transfer to a small bowl; stir in apricots and rosemary. Cool slightly.

Cut a lengthwise slit down the center of the tenderloin to within 1/2 in. of bottom. Open tenderloin so it lies flat. On each half, make another lengthwise slit down the center to within 1/2 in. of bottom; open roast and cover with plastic wrap. Flatten to 1/2-in. thickness. Remove plastic.

Spread mushroom mixture over meat. Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with a long side. Tie the roast at 1-1/2-in. to 2-in. intervals with kitchen string.

Combine the oil, garlic, salt and pepper; rub over roast. In a large ovenproof skillet, brown roast on all sides. Bake at 425° for 35-50 minutes or until meat reaches desired doneness (for medium-rare, a meat thermometer should read 145°; medium, 160°; well-done, 170°). Let stand for 10 minutes before slicing. Place slices on a platter and spoon pan juices over the top.

PERFECT WINTER SALAD

TENDERLOIN WITH CREMINI-APRICOT STUFFING

magnolia dream cheesecake

You'll love this scrumptious cheesecake that's velvety smooth and rich in peach and hazelnut flavor.

Charlene Chambers // ORMOND BEACH, FL

PREP: 50 MIN. BAKE: 1-1/2 HOURS + CHILLING
YIELD: 16 SERVINGS

1 cup hazelnuts, toasted, divided
12 whole graham crackers
1/4 cup sugar
6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted

FILLING
1-1/2 lbs. ricotta cheese
2 pkg. (8 oz. each) cream cheese, softened
2 cups (16 oz.) sour cream
1-1/2 cups sugar
6 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
4 Tbsp. hazelnut liqueur, divided
6 eggs, lightly beaten
3 medium peaches, sliced

Place a greased 10-in. springform pan on a double thickness of heavy-duty foil (about 18 in. square). Securely wrap foil around pan.

Place hazelnuts in a food processor; cover and pulse until coarsely chopped. Set aside 1/4 cup for garnish. Add graham crackers and sugar to food processor; cover and process until finely chopped. Add butter; process until blended. Press onto the bottom and 1 in. up the sides of prepared pan. Place pan on a baking sheet. Bake at 325° for 10 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.

In a large bowl, beat the ricotta, cream cheese, sour cream and sugar until well blended. Beat in flour and 2 Tbsp. liqueur. Add eggs; beat on low speed just until combined. Pour into crust. Place springform pan in a large baking pan; add 1 in. of hot water to larger pan.

Bake at 325° for 1-1/2 hours or until center is just set and top appears dull. Remove springform pan from water bath. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Carefully run a knife around edge of pan to loosen; cool 1 hour longer. Refrigerate overnight.

Toss peaches with remaining liqueur; arrange over top of cheesecake. Sprinkle reserved hazelnuts in the center.

MORE!

HELP YOURSELF.
For expert tips on setting up an attractive buffet table, visit **tasteofhome.com/plus**

RISE AND SHINE!

Hosting a holiday brunch? Show guests they're worth the effort with oven-fresh homemade bread

christmas wreath bread

"I like this bread because it looks so festive. I make extras for holiday bazaars and to give as gifts."

Agnes Ward // STRATFORD, ONTARIO

PREP: 30 MIN. + RISING
BAKE: 20 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 1 WREATH (16 SLICES)

2 pkg. (1/4 oz. each) active dry yeast
1-1/2 cups warm water (110° to 115°)
6 Tbsp. butter
1/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
1/4 cup sugar
1 egg
3/4 tsp. salt
4-1/2 to 5-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 Tbsp. butter, melted
1/2 cup chopped almonds
1-1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1 Tbsp. water
1/4 tsp. almond extract

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add the butter, milk powder, sugar, egg, salt and 3 cups flour. Beat on medium speed for 3 minutes. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough (dough will be sticky).

Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Punch dough down. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into an 18-in. x 12-in. rectangle. Brush with melted butter. Sprinkle with chopped almonds and cinnamon to within 1/2 in. of edges. Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with a long side; pinch seam to seal.

Place seam side down on a greased baking sheet; pinch ends together to form a ring. With scissors, cut from outside edge to two-thirds of the way toward center of ring at 1-in. intervals. Separate strips slightly; twist to allow filling to show. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 45 minutes.

Bake at 375° for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Combine confectioners' sugar, water and extract; drizzle over warm bread.

Cool Whip uses **hydrogenated oil.**

Reddi-wip always uses **real dairy cream.**

Which one will put a smile on your face?

Nothing's more real than Reddi-wip.

For a pretty presentation, arrange these on a tray in the form of a Christmas tree and sprinkle green sugar over the frosting.

— Leann Sauder

overnight cherry danish

"These flaky treats melt in your mouth and put a touch of holiday color on your table."

Leann Sauder // TREMONT, IL

PREP: 1-1/2 HOURS + RISING
BAKE: 15 MIN. YIELD: 3 DOZEN

2 pkg. (1/4 oz. each) active dry yeast
1/2 cup warm 2% milk (110° to 115°)
6 cups all-purpose flour
1/3 cup sugar
2 tsp. salt
1 cup cold butter
1-1/2 cups warm half-and-half cream (110° to 115°)
6 egg yolks, beaten
1 can (21 oz.) cherry pie filling

ICING:
2 Tbsp. butter, softened
3 cups confectioners' sugar
1/4 tsp. vanilla extract
Dash salt
4 to 5 Tbsp. half-and-half cream

In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in warm milk. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar and salt. Cut in butter until crumbly. Add the yeast mixture, cream and egg yolks; stir until mixture forms a soft dough (dough will be sticky). Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Punch down dough; divide into quarters. Roll each portion into an 18-in. x 4-in. rectangle; cut into 1-in. x 4-in. strips.

Place two strips side by side; twist together. Shape into a ring; pinch ends together. Repeat with remaining strips. Place 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 45 minutes.

Using the end of a wooden spoon handle, make a 1/2-in.-deep indentation in the center of each roll. Fill each with about 1 Tbsp. pie filling.

Bake at 350° for 14-16 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool.

For icing, in a large bowl, beat butter until fluffy. Gradually beat in the confectioners' sugar, vanilla, salt and enough cream to achieve a drizzling consistency. Drizzle over rolls.

MORE!

KNEAD MORE?
For additional holiday breads and rolls, visit **tasteofhome.com/holidaybaking**

nut and poppy seed rolls

"This Hungarian family favorite is a holiday treat. It tastes delicious with a cup of coffee on Christmas morning as you sit by the tree."

Carrie J. Gamble // DOYLESTOWN, PA

PREP: 40 MIN. + CHILLING
BAKE: 35 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 2 LOAVES (14 SLICES EACH)

2 pkg. (1/4 oz. each) active dry yeast
1/2 cup warm water (110° to 115°)
1 cup warm 2% milk (110° to 115°)
1 cup sour cream
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter, melted
2 eggs
1 tsp. salt
6 cups all-purpose flour

NUT FILLING:
1 cup ground pecans
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup chopped dates
1/2 cup 2% milk
1 tsp. salt
1 egg white

POPPY SEED FILLING
1 can (12-1/2 oz.) poppy seed cake and pastry filling
1/4 cup chopped raisins
1/4 cup chopped walnuts

ICING:
2 cups confectioners' sugar
2 to 3 Tbsp. water

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add the milk, sour cream, sugar, butter, eggs, salt and 3 cups flour. Beat until smooth. Beat in remaining flour until mixture forms a soft dough. Transfer to a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top; cover and refrigerate overnight.

Divide dough in half. Roll each portion into a 14-in. x 12-in. rectangle. For nut filling, in a small bowl, combine the pecans, sugar, dates, milk and salt. In another bowl, beat egg white until stiff peaks form; fold into pecan mixture. Spread over one portion. Spread poppy seed filling over remaining dough; sprinkle with raisins and walnuts. Roll up each jelly-roll style, starting with a long side; pinch seams to seal and tuck ends under. Place seam side down on parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 30 minutes.

Bake at 350° for 35-40 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack. Combine confectioners' sugar and enough water to achieve desired consistency; drizzle over breads.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This recipe was tested with Solo brand cake and pastry filling. Look for it in the baking aisle.

>> SEE CARRIE'S CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS ON P. 71

McCormick

Live deliciously

1 delicious recipe

3 kinds of cookies

Lots of happy memories

McCormick® Gingerbread Men

3 cups flour
2 tsp. McCormick® Ground Ginger
tsp. McCormick® Ground Cinnamon
tsp
tsp. McCormick
Ground Nutmeg
tsp
tsp
cup molasses

MIX
ROLL
BAKE
Makes 2 dozen

Visit mccormick.com to learn how to use this gingerbread dough for other delicious recipes:
White Chocolate Kissed Gingerbread Cookies and Gingerbread Whoopie Pies with Lemon Creme.

The Taste You Trust®

©

OPEN HOUSE

Grove and Carey Hunt
PORTLAND OR

FROM KIDS TO CROWDS

Couple's roomy kitchen is designed with [illegible] and entertaining—in mind

For the Hunts' floor plan, favorite quesadilla recipe and additional photos, visit tasteofhome.com/carey

Entertaining is huge for our family. So when we built our third home, in 2008, we created a spacious, kid-friendly kitchen to accommodate not only our family of five but friends and relatives, too. We have parties quite often for anywhere from two to 82 people.

I love that this kitchen is large enough to hold a ton of people for eating, drinking and dancing, but we can invite just one family over and it still feels cozy. Plus, our family—including my husband, Grove, a contractor; our kids, Emma, 6, Ellie, 4-1/2, and Sammy, 3; and our dog, Abby—can be in the kitchen at the same time with room to spare.

I never have to worry about the kids when they're playing outside. The kitchen was designed so I can literally keep an eye on them from anywhere in the room—whether I'm at my desk or cooking dinner.

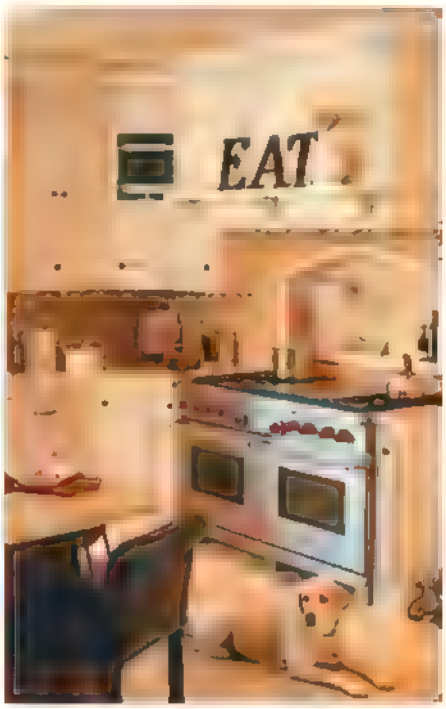
I'm still learning all about the convection function on our double oven. With all the entertaining we do, our two dishwashers and oversized refrigerator are a necessity.

Four baskets tucked into the island hold a variety of snacks, so the kids can help themselves. They're good about taking things only when they're really hungry.

The island is also where we eat breakfast and lunch. At breakfast, I'm typically a short-order cook, creating three different meals for each of our kids. They like to watch the TV in the corner cabinet while I cook.

Our kitchen is practical but

"The kitchen was designed so I can literally keep an eye on the kids from anywhere in the room—whether I'm at my desk or cooking dinner." — Carey Hunt // PORTLAND, OR



CAREY'S PARTY TIPS

>> Start early! Set out dishes ahead of time with a sticky note telling you what food goes where.

>> Slice and set out desserts at the beginning of the party. Some don't like to wait until after dinner!

>> Bring out an extra vase so you're not digging around your kitchen when someone brings you flowers.

beautiful, too! We love the way the kitchen glistens, with its shiny countertops of granite and marble, glazed cabinets and two chandeliers over the island to keep things sparkling

We didn't build a formal dining room in this house, instead, we have a dining area in the kitchen. I'm a high-energy person, but no matter what we're doing, we all sit down together for dinner every evening. I find peace in gathering at the kitchen table to talk about our day and what the next day will bring

(Above) Sammy, 3, grabs a snack from the island baskets placed just right for little hands. (Top) Red accents add a festive pop of color to this spacious kitchen.

tex-mex chili

Hearty and spicy, this is a man's chili for sure. You can also simmer on the stove—the longer, the better!

Eric Hayes // ANTIOCH, CA

PREP: 20 MIN. COOK: 6 HOURS
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS (1 1/3 CUPS EACH)

3 lbs. beef stew meat
1 Tbsp. canola oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
3 cans (16 oz. each) kidney beans, rinsed and drained
3 cans (15 oz. each) tomato sauce
1 can (14-1/2 oz.) diced tomatoes, undrained
1 cup water
1 can (6 oz.) tomato paste
3/4 cup salsa verde
1 envelope chili seasoning
2 tsp. dried minced onion
1 tsp. chili powder
1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
1/2 tsp. ground cumin
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
Shredded cheddar cheese and minced fresh cilantro

In a large skillet, brown beef in oil in batches. Add garlic to the pan; cook and stir for 1 minute. Transfer to a 6-qt. slow cooker.

Stir in the remaining ingredients. Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours or until meat is tender. Garnish each serving with cheese and cilantro.

> This dip recipe doubles easily, and since I usually have all the ingredients on hand, it's a great 'go-to' recipe when unexpected guests show up.
>
> — Coleen Corner

THE GANG'S ALL HERE!
Need more crowd pleasing recipes for your holiday festivities? Visit **tasteofhome.com/potluck**

hot wing dip

Coleen Corner // GROVE CITY, PA

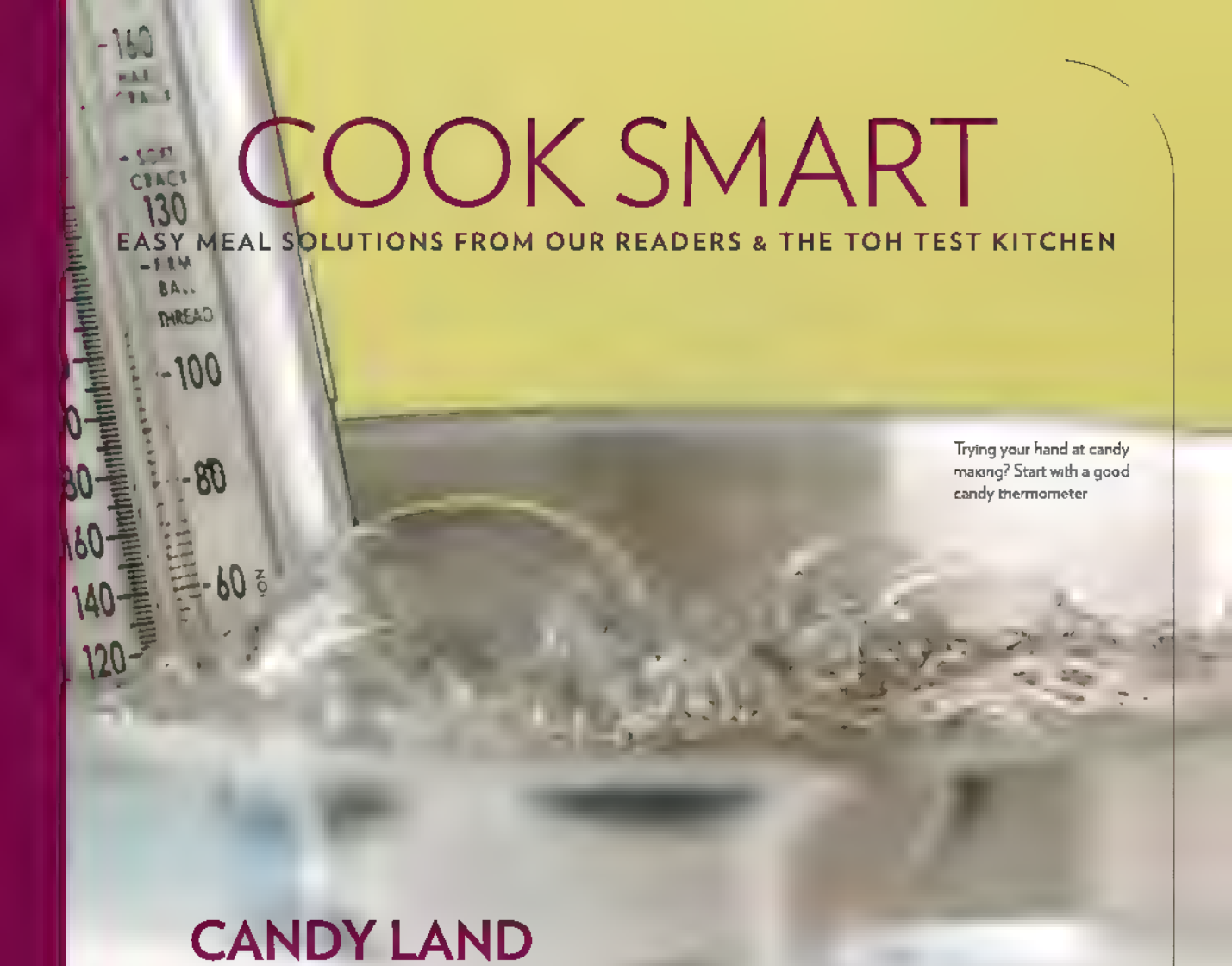
PREP: 10 MIN. COOK: 1 HOUR
YIELD: 4-1/2 CUPS

2 cups shredded cooked chicken
1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, cubed
2 cups (8 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese
1 cup ranch salad dressing
1/2 cup Louisiana-style hot sauce
Tortilla chips and/or celery sticks
Minced fresh parsley, optional

In a 3-qt. slow cooker, combine the chicken, cream cheese, cheddar, salad dressing and hot sauce. Cover and cook on low for 1 hour or until cheese is melted. Serve with chips and/or celery. Sprinkle with parsley if desired.

COOK SMART

EASY MEAL SOLUTIONS FROM OUR READERS & THE TOH TEST KITCHEN



Trying your hand at candy making? Start with a good candy thermometer

CANDY LAND

Q Help! I've never made candy and really want to try it. Can you offer some beginner recipes and helpful hints?

—Mellissa_KY // TOH ON-LINE COMMUNITY

This is the perfect time of year to make candy! It's a wonderful treat—and a great gift item. You'll find a few easy recipes in this issue (turn to p. 61) and at **tasteofhome.com**. Here are some useful tips to get you started.

- Use heavy-gauge saucepans deep enough to allow the candy mixture to boil freely without boiling over. Use a wooden spoon with a long handle for safe stirring when preparing recipes with boiling sugar.
- Make candy on days when the humidity is less than 60%. Humid weather affects results of candies that are cooked to specific temperatures or that contain egg whites
- Invest in a candy thermometer. Whether you're making fudge, brittle or caramel, a thermometer will give the accurate temperature of the sugar syrup so you know when to stop the cooking process. Simply attach the thermometer, using the movable clip, to the side of the pan, keeping the end from touching the bottom of the pan. The sugar syrup will rise quickly after it reaches 220°, so keep an eye on it.
- When the candy's done, some syrup might stick to the spoon and the sides of the pan. Add water to the pan, place it on the stove and turn the burner to high. The crystallized sugar will dissolve as the water boils. Put the spoon and any other utensils you used in the water to clean them at the same time

Find more delicious candy recipes and tips at **tasteofhome.com/christmascandies**

SWEET RELATIONS

Grab your aunt (or uncle, grandma or mom) and make this easy holiday candy

Few things are more fun than cooking with Aunt Hillary. So say **Emma and Thomas Hein,** who live 5 hours from their aunt in Silverdale, WA.

"We cook together at Christmas and over summer break," says Emma, 10. "I like to work with the ingredients, putting stuff together to make whatever you want. My brother likes to make up his own recipes."

Thomas, 8, even wants to open a restaurant someday. "I've had a lot of fun making cupcakes with Aunt Hillary," he says.

Their aunt, **Hillary Templin** of Kennewick, WA, has been "cooking" since age 2, when she'd help her grandma mix cookie dough. Hillary's been cooking with Emma and Thomas since they were about that age.

"As soon as they were old enough to pour the ingredients or stir the dough, we started cooking together," Hillary recalls.

One treat they've made together is Hillary's yummy Green Mint Bark. "But whatever we make, we always have fun!"

green mint bark

"I started making this sweet Christmas treat a few years ago, and it has become a family favorite."

Hillary Templin // KENNEWICK, WA

PREP: 20 MIN. + CHILLING
YIELD: 1-1/2 LBS.

1 pkg. (10 to 12 oz.) white baking chips

12 oz. green candy coating disks

1 tsp. peppermint extract

2 to 3 candy canes, crushed

Line a baking sheet with foil; set aside. In a microwave, melt chips; stir until smooth. Spread into a 13-in. x 9-in. rectangle on prepared baking sheet.

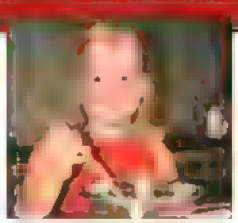
In a microwave, melt candy coating; stir until smooth. Stir in extract. Spread over white layer; sprinkle with candy.

Chill for 10 minutes or until firm. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container.

Nutrition Facts: 1 oz. equals 171 calories, 9 g fat (7 g saturated fat), 3 mg cholesterol, 32 mg sodium, 21 g carbohydrate, 0 fiber, 1 g protein. **Diabetic Exchanges:** 2 fat, 1 starch.

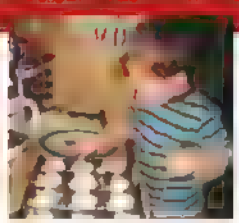
KNOW KIDS WHO LIKE TO COOK? » If your kids like to spend time in the kitchen, we'd love to hear about it. Send recipes and photos to **tasteofhome.com/submit**. Remember to put "Kids in the Kitchen" in the subject line.

Olivia Barnett, 2
SCHERERVILLE, IN



Camryn Green, 8
FORT SMITH, AR

Shelby Shannon, 4
MOUNT STERLING, OH



Elijah Denton, 2
WILSON, NC

Check out more kid-friendly recipes and the newest downloadable coloring page at **tasteofhome.com/kids**

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CHEESE INGREDIENTS: water, partially hydrogenated soybean oil, rennet casein, modified corn starch, potato starch, sodium aluminum phosphate, vital wheat gluten, salt, potassium chloride, citric acid, potassium sorbate [preservative], sodium phosphate, sodium citrate, titanium dioxide [color], maltodextrin, magnesium oxide, zinc oxide, vitamin A palmitate, riboflavin, vitamin B12

BAGEL BITES® SNACKS

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CHEESE INGREDIENTS: milk, cheese cultures, salt, enzymes.

	Prep	Fat (g)	Trans Fat (g)
Bagel Bites®	**Baked**	**7**	**0**
Totino's® P.zza Rolls®	Pre-Fried	10	1.5

Bagel Bites®

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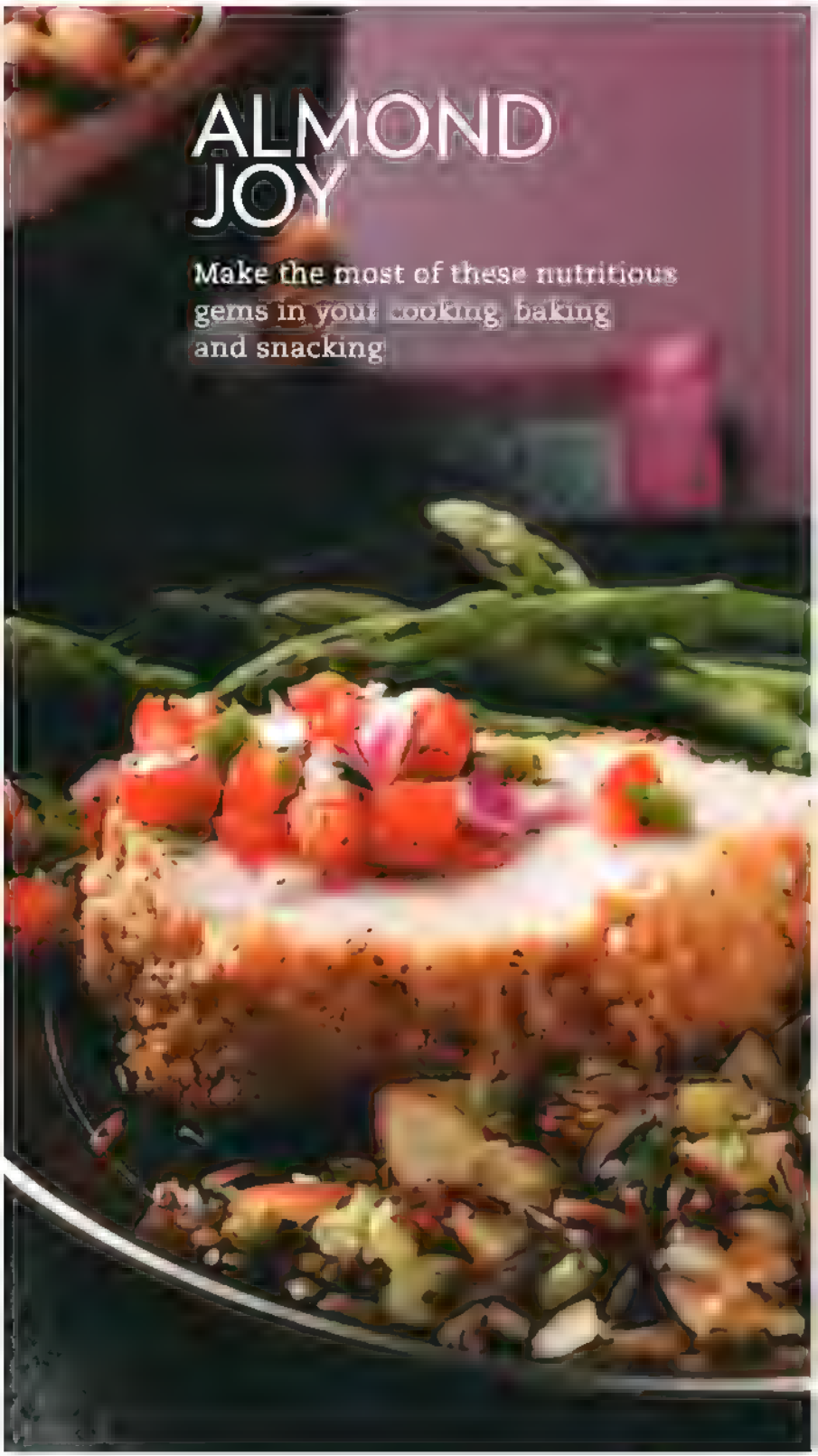


almond-crusted pork loin

Paired with a fresh, homemade salsa, this almond-topped pork loin bursts with flavor

Almond Board of California

PREP: 35 MIN.
BAKE: 1 HOUR + STANDING
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS (2 CUPS SALSA)

Vegetable oil spray
6 oz. slivered California almonds (1-1/4 cups chopped)
2 medium garlic cloves, crushed
Salt and pepper to taste
2 egg whites
1 1/2-lbs. boneless pork loin

SALSA:
2 medium tomatoes, diced (about 2 cups)
1/2 cup diced red onion
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
1 tsp. ground cumin
2 Tbsp. lime juice
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste (optional)

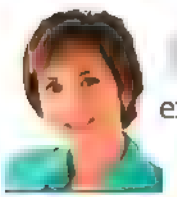
Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a roasting pan with foil and place a meat rack on the foil. Spray with vegetable oil spray. Coarsely grind almonds in a food processor. Mix almonds, garlic and salt and pepper to taste in a bowl. Set aside.

Whip egg whites to form soft peaks. Remove fat from the pork. Roll the pork in the egg whites and then in the almond mixture. Roll once more in the egg whites and in the almond mixture again. Place pork on the rack and press any remaining almonds onto the pork.

Roast 1 hour, or until a meat thermometer reads 160°F. Remove from oven and let rest 15 minutes. Slice and serve with tomato salsa.

Mix the salsa ingredients together. Add salt and pepper if needed.

Per serving: 499 calories, 30 g fat (5.9 g saturated fat), 85 mg cholesterol, 140 mg sodium, 14 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber, 46 g protein.



One serving (23 almonds) will give you an energy burst that will fill you up and not out.

— Diane Werner // TOH FOOD DIRECTOR

nutty wild rice

Crunch! Your family will be wild about this almond-rich side. Served warm, this delightful dish makes any entree a treat to eat

Heather Webb // CHANNELVIEW, TX

PREP: 15 MIN. COOK: 50 MIN.
YIELD: 5 SERVINGS

2-1/2 cups water
1/2 cup uncooked wild rice
1 Tbsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce
6 green onions, sliced
1 Tbsp. butter
2/3 cup sliced almonds, toasted
1/4 cup sunflower kernels
3 Tbsp. sesame seeds, toasted
1/4 tsp. salt

In a large saucepan, bring the water, rice and soy sauce to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 45-60 minutes or until rice is tender.

Meanwhile, in a small skillet, saute onions in butter until tender. Stir in the remaining ingredients; heat through. Remove from the heat.

Drain rice if necessary. Stir in onion mixture.

Nutrition Facts: 3/4 cup equals 236 calories, 15 g fat (3 g saturated fat), 8 mg cholesterol, 314 mg sodium, 21 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 8 g protein.

sweet-hot spiced nuts

Put some kick in your holiday gathering with these well-spiced almond snacks. They also make a terrific hostess gift packed in a festive tin

Carla Hutton // LAKESIDE, MT

PREP: 10 MIN. BAKE: 20 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 2 CUPS

1 egg white
2 cups unblanched almonds
2 tsp. canola oil
1/3 cup sugar
3/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground coriander
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/8 tsp. ground allspice

In a large bowl, beat egg white until frothy. Add almonds and oil, stir gently to coat. Combine the remaining ingredients; add to egg white mixture and stir to coat.

Spread into a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 300° for 18-22 minutes or until lightly browned, stirring once. Cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Nutrition Facts: 1/4 cup equals 257 calories, 20 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 165 mg sodium, 16 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 8 g protein.

MORE!

For additional almond recipes and tips, plus information on Food Director Diane Werner's visit to the Almond Board of California, visit **tasteofhome.com/almonds**

Ocean Spray

ADD A NEW TWIST TO YOUR HOLIDAY ROAST

Chef Tyler Florence

Tangy Ocean Spray® cranberries add a lively burst of flavor to this deliciously different pairing with fresh ham.

Fresh Country Ham with Cranberry Chutney

INGREDIENTS
5-6 lb. fresh ham
Extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and ground black pepper

TYLER FLORENCE

Apple-Cranberry Sauce
6 pink lady apples, split in half
2 cups Ocean Spray® Fresh or Frozen Cranberries
1 cinnamon stick
1 bay leaf
1 tablespoon pickling spice
1 tablespoon black mustard seeds
2 tablespoons sugar
1-inch piece of ginger
1 1/2 cups apple juice
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar

DIRECTIONS
Preheat oven to 300°F. Score fat and put ham, fat side up, in a roasting pan. Rub with extra-virgin olive oil and season with plenty of salt and pepper all over. Cover loosely with foil and roast for 2 hours. Remove foil and roast for final hour uncovered.

Into a large saucepan, add all the sauce ingredients and simmer for 10-15 minutes until cranberries and apples are almost falling apart and the sauce is fragrant. Serve with baked fresh ham.

Ocean Spray

Makes 8-10 servings

For even more ways to enjoy cranberries, visit www.OCEANSPRAY.COM

LET'S DO BRUNCH

Start the day in a thrifty way with these super eye-openers

rainbow quiche

With plenty of veggies and a creamy egg-cheese filling, this tasty quiche gets two thumbs up!

Molly Thompson // OSWEGO, NY

PREP: 20 MIN.
BAKE: 45 MIN. + STANDING
YIELD: 8 SERVINGS

Pastry for single-crust pie (9 in.)
1-1/2 cups chopped fresh broccoli florets
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
1 each small green, sweet red and orange peppers, finely chopped
2 Tbsp. butter
1 cup chopped fresh spinach
1 cup (4 oz.) shredded Mexican cheese blend
6 eggs
1-3/4 cups 2% milk
1/2 tsp. salt

Line a 9-in. deep-dish pie plate with pastry; trim and flute edges. In a large skillet, saute the broccoli, onion, mushrooms and peppers in butter until tender. Stir in spinach. Spoon into prepared crust; sprinkle with cheese. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, milk and salt; pour over cheese.

Bake at 350° for 45-55 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Let stand for 10 minutes before cutting.

EDITOR'S NOTE: You may also use this recipe to fill two frozen deep-dish pie shells. Bake the quiches for 40-45 minutes. Each yields six servings.

perfect brunch omelets (shown above right)

"These omelets are extra good if you make the salsa a day ahead to let the flavors blend."

Francis Garland // ANNISTON, AL

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 MIN.
YIELD: 3 SERVINGS

2 medium tomatoes, chopped
1-1/2 tsp. chopped red onion
1-1/2 tsp. each chopped green, sweet red and yellow pepper
1 tsp. chopped seeded jalapeno pepper
1-1/2 tsp. lime juice
1 tsp. minced fresh cilantro
1 small garlic clove, minced
1/8 tsp. dried oregano
1 Tbsp. butter, divided
6 eggs
1/4 cup 2% milk
1/4 tsp. each salt and pepper
1 cup (4 oz.) shredded cheddar cheese

In a small bowl, combine the tomatoes, onion, peppers, lime juice, cilantro, garlic and oregano; set aside.

In small nonstick skillet, melt 1 tsp. butter over medium-high heat.

* costs are per serving

Whisk the eggs, milk, salt and pepper. Add 2/3 cup egg mixture to skillet (mixture should set immediately at edges)

As eggs set, push cooked edges toward the center, letting uncooked portion flow underneath. When the eggs are set, spoon 1/3 cup tomato mixture on one side and sprinkle with 1/3 cup cheese; fold other side over filling. Slide omelet onto a plate. Repeat

EDITOR'S NOTE: When cutting hot peppers, disposable gloves are recommended. Avoid touching your face.

brie-and-veggie brunch strata

Lee Elrod // NEWNAN, GA

PREP: 30 MIN. + CHILLING
BAKE: 45 MIN. + STANDING
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced

1 large sweet red pepper, chopped

1 large Yukon Gold potato, peeled and cubed

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1 loaf sourdough bread (1 lb.), cubed

1 round Brie cheese (8 oz.), rind removed, cut into 1/2-in. cubes

1 cup (4 oz.) shredded Parmesan

8 eggs

3 cups 2% milk

2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard

1 tsp. seasoned salt

1 tsp. pepper

In a large skillet, saute the onion, red pepper and potato in oil until tender

In a greased 13-in. x 9-in. baking dish, layer half of the bread, onion mixture, Brie and Parmesan. Repeat layers. In a large bowl, whisk the remaining ingredients; pour over layers. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Remove from the refrigerator 30 minutes before baking. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 45-50 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Let stand for 10 minutes before cutting

This filling strata is great for a gathering. You can use 2 cups of Swiss cheese instead of the Brie, if you wish.

— Lee Elrod

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EASY ELEGANCE

This recipe uses only a handful of ingredients to create a simple but elegant entree fit for the holidays.

—Josephine Piro

MORE!

DOWNSIZED & DELICIOUS

For more two-serving recipes, sign up for the free Cooking for 2 E-newsletter at **tasteofhome.com/for2newsletter**

berry-port game hens

Josephine Piro // EASTON, PA

PREP: 20 MIN. BAKE: 50 MIN.
YIELD: 2 SERVINGS

1 large orange
2 Cornish game hens (20 to 24 oz. each)
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1 cup ruby port wine or grape juice
1/4 cup seedless strawberry jam
5 tsp. stone-ground mustard

Finely grate peel from orange to measure 1 tsp. Cut orange in half widthwise; cut a thin slice from each half. Quarter slices and set aside. Juice the orange to measure 1/4 cup.

Loosen skin around hen breasts and thighs; place orange slices under the skin.

Place hens in greased 13-in. x 9-in. baking dish. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 40 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine the wine, jam and orange juice. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 6-8 minutes or until slightly thickened. Stir in mustard and orange peel.

Set aside 1/2 cup sauce for serving; brush remaining sauce over hens. Bake hens 10-20 minutes longer or until a meat thermometer reads 180°, basting occasionally with pan juices. Warm reserved sauce; serve with hens.

julia's green beans & mushrooms

"My mother prepared fresh green beans a number of ways. I've put my own stamp on them with this delicious side dish."

Julia Beccari // LEWISTON, NY

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 MIN.
YIELD: 2 SERVINGS

1/3 lb. fresh green beans, trimmed
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
1 Tbsp. olive oil
2-1/2 tsp. butter
1/4 tsp. dried parsley flakes
Dash each seasoned salt, garlic powder and coarsely ground pepper
1 Tbsp. dry bread crumbs
1-1/2 tsp. grated Romano cheese

Place beans in a small saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil. Cover and cook for 4-7 minutes or until crisp-tender.

Meanwhile, in a small skillet, saute mushrooms in oil and butter until tender. Stir in the parsley flakes, seasoned salt, garlic powder and pepper. Add bread crumbs; cook until lightly browned.

Drain beans; toss with mushroom mixture. Sprinkle with cheese.

COOK SMART

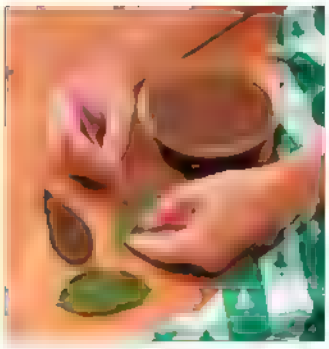
cooking school

Dana Elliott
CULINARY SPECIALIST
TOH COOKING SCHOOL

SWEET & EASY LEAVES

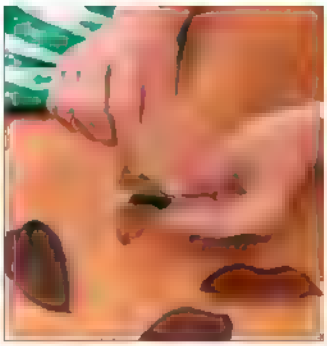
Besides terrific recipes, Taste of Home Cooking School programs offer great tips, like how to make chocolate leaves. They're easy and really dress up a holiday dessert!

The Spring 2010 schedule for Taste of Home Cooking Schools will be available soon at **tasteofhome.com/cooking schools** We hope to see you at one in your area!



LEFT. Wash several lemon, rose or mint leaves and set aside until completely dry. Melt 1/2 cup chips (semisweet, milk, vanilla or white) and 1/4 teaspoon shortening. With a new, small paintbrush, brush melted chocolate in a thin layer on the underside of each leaf. Refrigerate until set, about 10 minutes. Apply a second layer of melted chocolate; chill for at least 15 minutes or overnight.

RIGHT. Gently peel leaf from chocolate. If chocolate leaves won't be used immediately, store in a cool dry place in a covered container.



FISH ON THE FLY

"I buy fresh scallops from a local fisherman, so I use simple ingredients to showcase them." —Joan Churchill

scallops in sage cream

Joan Churchill // DOVER, NH

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 20 MIN.
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

1-1/2 lbs. sea scallops
1/4 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper
3 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
1/2 cup chopped shallots
3/4 cup heavy whipping cream
6 fresh sage leaves, thinly sliced
Hot cooked pasta, optional

Sprinkle scallops with salt and pepper. In a large skillet, saute scallops in 2 Tbsp. oil for 1-1/2 to 2 minutes on each side or until firm and opaque. Remove and keep warm.

In the same skillet, saute shallots in remaining oil until tender. Add cream; bring to a boil. Cook and stir for 30 seconds or until slightly thickened.

Return scallops to the pan; heat through. Stir in sage. Serve with pasta if desired.

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coconut-mango mahi mahi

"Whipping a bit of candied ginger into the sauce enhances its unique and delicious flavor."

Don Thompson // HOUSTON, OH

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 MIN.
YIELD: 6 SERVINGS (1-1/2 CUPS SAUCE)

1/2 cup all-purpose flour
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup dry bread crumbs
1 cup flaked coconut
6 mahi mahi fillets (5 oz. each)
2 Tbsp. peanut or canola oil
2 medium mangoes, peeled and cubed
1/4 cup white wine or chicken broth
2 Tbsp. brown sugar
1 garlic clove, halved
1 tsp. finely chopped crystallized ginger
1 tsp. soy sauce
1/8 tsp. pepper
2 Tbsp. minced fresh basil

Place flour and eggs in separate shallow bowls. In another shallow bowl, combine bread crumbs and coconut. Dip fillets in the flour, eggs, then bread crumb mixture.

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook fish in oil for 4-5 minutes on each side or until golden brown on the outside and fish just turns opaque in the center.

Meanwhile, in a food processor, combine the mangoes, wine, brown sugar, garlic, ginger, soy sauce and pepper; cover and process until blended. Stir in basil. Serve with fish.

honey-lime red snapper

"If you can't find snapper, you can substitute most any firm white fish. And if you don't have key lime juice, use regular lime juice."

Ken Hulme // VENICE, FL

PREP: 5 MIN. + MARINATING
BROIL: 15 MIN.
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

3/4 cup key lime juice
1/2 cup honey
4 red snapper fillets (6 oz. each)
2 tsp. chili powder

In a small bowl, combine lime juice and honey. Pour 1/2 cup into a large resealable plastic bag; add the fish. Seal bag and turn to coat; refrigerate for up to 1 hour. Place remaining mixture in a small saucepan; set aside.

Drain fish and discard marinade. Sprinkle fillets with chili powder; place on a greased broiler pan.

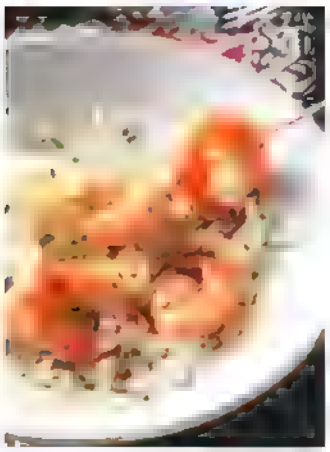
Broil 4-6 in. from the heat for 12-15 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Meanwhile, bring reserved lime juice mixture to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, until reduced by half. Spoon over fillets.

These kabobs are so good, guests always think I labored over the preparation. But really, you can make them in no time.

— Marcia Pilgeram

MORE!

For more swift dinner options, ready in 30 minutes or less, visit **tasteofhome.com/30**



spicy shrimp kabobs

Marcia Pilgeram // SANDPOINT, ID

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 MIN.
YIELD: 8 KABOBS

1/4 cup butter, cubed
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. ground coriander
1 tsp. ground cumin
1/2 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. grated lemon peel
1/4 tsp. salt
1 lb. uncooked large shrimp, peeled and deveined

In a small saucepan, melt butter; add the lemon juice, spices, lemon peel and salt.

Thread shrimp onto eight metal or soaked wooden skewers. Place skewers in a greased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan. Broil 3-4 in. from the heat for 3-4 minutes on each side or until shrimp turn pink, basting occasionally with butter mixture.

MARCIA'S TIP:
You can serve the skewers as an appetizer or as a main course with jasmine rice and chutney. Either way, they'll disappear fast!

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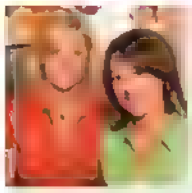
COOK SMART

eat, shrink & be merry



BY JANET & GRETA PODLESKI

MEX APPEAL!

If you think eating healthfully means you can't enjoy spicy, full-flavored Mexican food, think again! Treat your family to a guilt-free fiesta by substituting whole wheat flour tortillas for greasy, deep-fried taco shells, using part-skim cheeses instead of the full-fat variety, and loading up on authentic Mexican herbs and spices. Taco 'bout delicious!

Warm, spicy ground chicken, peppers and onions are wrapped in a soft flour tortilla and topped with cheddar cheese and sour cream. Yum!

spicy ground chicken tacos

PREP: 20 MIN. COOK: 20 MIN.
YIELD: MAKES 8 SOFT TACOS

1-1/2 pounds ground chicken breast

1 cup diced onions

3/4 cup diced green bell pepper

1 tsp. minced garlic

2 cups seeded and diced tomatoes

1/2 cup grated carrot

1/4 cup ketchup

1 tbsp. each chili powder and red wine vinegar

2 tsp. brown sugar

1 tsp. ground cumin

1/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

8 lettuce leaves

8 7-inch whole-grain flour tortillas

1 cup shredded reduced-fat sharp (old) cheddar cheese (4 oz.)

1/2 cup light (3% or 5%) sour cream

Spray a large, non-stick skillet with cooking spray. Add chicken, onions, green pepper, and garlic. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until chicken is no longer pink, about 7 to 8 minutes. Drain off any liquid.

Add 1 cup tomatoes, carrot, ketchup, chili powder, vinegar, brown sugar, cumin, and pepper to chicken. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. If mixture is too saucy, simmer uncovered for a few more minutes, until most of the liquid has evaporated. Remove from heat.

To assemble tacos, place one lettuce leaf in center of a tortilla. Spoon 1/8 chicken mixture over top. Sprinkle some of the cheese and some of the remaining tomatoes over chicken, followed by a dollop of sour cream. Roll up bottom of tortilla

to cover filling, then fold in sides. Serve immediately. A little messy, but worth it!

Per taco: 288 calories, 6.3 g total fat (2.3 g saturated fat), 30 g protein, 29 g carbohydrate, 2.8 g fiber, 52 mg cholesterol, 390 mg sodium

pie caramba! mexican pizza

This zesty Mexican pizza is loaded with seasoned ground beef, black beans, tomatoes and corn

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 MIN.
YIELD: MAKES 1 PIZZA, 8 SLICES

8 oz. extra-lean ground beef
1/3 cup minced onion
1 tsp. minced garlic
1/2 cup diced grape tomatoes
1/4 cup each grated carrot and diced green bell pepper
1/2 cup frozen or canned corn
1/4 cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed
1 tbsp. minced fresh cilantro
1 tsp. chili powder
1/2 tsp. ground cumin
1/4 tsp. each salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup pizza sauce
1 12-inch, pre-baked, thin-crust pizza shell
1 cup packed shredded light old (sharp) cheddar cheese (4 oz.)
2 tbsp. minced green onion
Light sour cream, salsa, and guacamole (optional)

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Spray a large, non-stick skillet with cooking spray. Add beef, onion, and garlic. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until beef is no longer pink. Add tomatoes, carrot, green pepper, corn, and beans. Cook and stir for 2 more minutes. Add cilantro, chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper. Cook 1 more minute. Remove from heat.

Spread pizza sauce evenly over crust. Top with half the cheese.

Spoon beef mixture evenly over pizza. Top with remaining cheese, followed by green onion.

Place pizza directly on middle oven rack and bake for 10 to 12 minutes, or until cheese is completely melted and crust is lightly browned.

Tastes great with fajita-like accompaniments such as sour cream, salsa, and guacamole.

Per slice: 186 calories, 6.8 g total fat (3.4 g saturated fat), 12 g protein, 18 g carbohydrate, 1.9 g fiber, 28 mg cholesterol, 455 mg sodium

If you think you have someone eating out of your hands, it's a good idea to count your fingers.

POP QUIZINE

Who said, "Eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath?"

a. Elizabeth Browning
b. William Shakespeare
c. Robert Browning
d. Miss Manners

Julia Roberts, Madonna, Cher & Jack Nicholson are all members of...

a. Adult Peanut Butter Lovers' Fan Club
b. Chocoholics Anonymous
c. Celebrities for Caffeine Consumption
d. Vegetarian Council of America

SAY IT AIN'T SO!

It's nacho healthiest appetizer at the Mexican joint, and it just may leave a huge paunch under your poncho! Top a mountain of fried tortilla chips with a third of a pound of melted cheese and a quarter pound of ground beef. Add high-fat sour cream and whaddya get? A fiesta for cardiologists and muchos pesos for folks in the weight-loss industry! A typical restaurant order of beef and cheese nachos will turn you into a piñata with approximate y 1,300 calories and 80 grams of fat! Ai caramba! Better share with a few amigos, or you can say adios to your waistline.

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ROOT FOR GINGER

A staple of holiday baking, zesty ginger brightens up main dishes, sides and beverages, too

ginger chicken

Ginger and soy lend an Asian flair to this hearty and healthy main dish

Ben Haen // BALDWIN, WI

PREP: 20 MIN. + CHILLING COOK: 15 MIN.
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

1 egg white, beaten

1 Tbsp. soy sauce

1 tsp. cornstarch

1/8 tsp. white pepper

1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-in. pieces

SAUCE:

1/2 tsp. cornstarch

2 Tbsp. rice vinegar

2 Tbsp. soy sauce

1 tsp. sugar

STIR-FRY

1 Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. peanut oil, divided

1 medium green pepper, julienned

3 green onions, cut into 1-in. lengths

1/2 cup canned bamboo shoots, finely chopped

2 to 3 tsp. minced fresh gingerroot

1/4 cup slivered almonds, toasted

Hot cooked rice, optional

In a large resealable plastic bag, combine the egg white, soy sauce, cornstarch and pepper. Add chicken; seal bag and turn to coat. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. For sauce, combine the cornstarch, vinegar, soy sauce and sugar until smooth; set aside.

Drain chicken and discard marinade. In a large skillet or wok, stir-fry chicken in 1 Tbsp. oil until no longer pink. Remove and keep warm.

Stir-fry green pepper and onions in remaining oil for 2 minutes. Add bamboo shoots and ginger; stir-fry 3-4 minutes longer or until vegetables are crisp-tender.

Stir sauce mixture and add to the pan. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Add chicken and heat through. Sprinkle with almonds. Serve with rice if desired.

Nutrition Facts: 1 cup stir-fry (calculated without rice) equals 248 calories, 12 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 63 mg cholesterol, 748 mg sodium, 7 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 28 g protein. **Diabetic Exchanges:** 3 lean meat, 1-1/2 fat, 1/2 starch.

DID YOU KNOW?
Ginger can relieve symptoms of motion sickness and morning sickness. Sip a cup of ginger tea or chew a piece of crystallized ginger.

TASTE & AROMA.
Ginger has a warm, woody scent and a flavor that's partly sweet, partly peppery with a lemon-like zest.

MARKET TIP
Store fresh gingerroot in a paper bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. It keeps for weeks! Dried ginger powder will keep in the fridge for about a year.

FULL OF GINGER
You'll find more recipes using this popular spice at **tasteofhome.com/ginger**

LET THEM EAT CAKE!

YOU COULD BE NEXT!
TURN THE PAGE TO ENTER OUR NEXT RECIPE CONTEST »

Any way you slice it, cake is one dessert that's always a crowd-pleaser. The 12 scrumptious winners in our "Cakes and Tortes" contest will not only satisfy everyone at your table but impress them, too. You won't know which cake to try first!

THE WINNERS ARE...

GRAND PRIZE–$500
Jo Ann Koerkenmeier // DAMIANSVILLE, IL

2ND PLACE–$300
Trisha Kruse // EAGLE, ID

3RD PLACE–$150
Penny McNeill // KITCHENER, ON

ENTER OUR NEXT CONTEST!

SUGAR & SPICE

Candy canes, snowballs, sugar cookies and much more—what are your most-requested, must-make holiday cookies? Show us the treats that help make your holiday special in our new "Holiday Cookies" contest.

Enter now and you could win $500 for 1st place, $300 for 2nd place and $150 for 3rd. Nine runners-up will receive the *Contest Winning Annual Recipes* cookbook.

WE'D LIKE TO CONSIDER:

Your best cut-out cookie recipes—and don't forget to include decorating ideas!

Drop cookies, wreaths, crackles, pinwheels and Mexican wedding cakes

Your yummiest recipes using a cookie press

Kid-favorites like reindeer-shaped cookies, gingerbread men, Santas and snowmen

Old-fashioned classics -molasses, thumbprints, pfeffernuesse

Sandwich cookies with colorful, flavorful filling

Family favorite Hanukkah cookies

(Save your holiday cakes, candies, breads and other goodies for later. They'll get their own contest!)

ENTRY DEADLINE IS
February 16, 2010

Winners will be announced in the October/November 2010 issue.

YOU COULD WIN $500!

Enter today at **tasteofhome.com/recipecontests**

SHE TAKES THE CAKE

"If you love chocolate, this is the cake for you. It's rich and delicious."
— Jo Ann Koerkenmeier

When **Jo Ann Koerkenmeier** took a chocolate cooking class about 2 years ago, she had no idea it would help her win the Grand Prize in *Taste of Home's* recent cake contest.

"I attended the class with my daughter Amanda, her bridesmaids and future mother-in-law," says Jo Ann of Damiansville, IL. "I got the recipe for Chocolate Truffle Cake at the class and made it for Amanda's bridal shower. It was a big hit."

It went over well with our judges, too, who couldn't resist its rich, triple-chocolaty flavor.

"It's a chocolate lover's dream!" says Jo Ann.

By day, Jo Ann is a project coordinator for Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC). "I'm also a farmer's wife who brings hot meals to the field for my husband, Ralph; our son, Tim, and my father-in-law."

But cooking and baking are more than a necessity for Jo Ann. They're her passion. "My love of cooking and baking was passed down from my mother, who spent a lot of time in the kitchen," she says. "Now, my daughter has gotten the bug. At Christmas, we make about a dozen kinds of cookies to share with family, friends and coworkers."

Desserts are definitely one of her specialties. And with Chocolate Truffle Cake as a shining example of her handiwork, it's no wonder she's asked to bring the dessert for every family occasion.

JO ANN'S TIP

"Make sure to constantly stir the chocolate so it doesn't burn. I like to prepare the cake a day ahead because it does take time. But it's well worth it!"

chocolate truffle cake

Jo Ann Koerkenmeier // DAMIANSVILLE, IL

Love chocolate? Then this tender, luxurious layer cake is for you. With a ganache glaze and a fabulous bittersweet filling, the indulgence is so worth it.

apricot almond torte

Trisha Kruse // EAGLE, ID

"This pretty cake takes a bit of time, so I like to make the layers ahead of time and assemble the day of serving, making it an easier option for entertaining."

chocolate toffee cake

Penny McNeill // KITCHENER, ON

"I've been making this cake for years, and it's my most requested cake for coffee get-togethers. Now that I have two grandsons, I serve it at birthdays, too!"

raspberry chocolate torte

Amy Helbig // MESA, AZ

Wow holiday guests with this striking cake that looks fancy but is easy to decorate. The fresh raspberries and chocolate mounds on top make it a real standout.

// APRICOT ALMOND TORTE

PREP: 45 MIN
BAKE: 25 MIN + COOLING YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

- 3 eggs
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup ground almonds, toasted
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1-1/2 cups heavy whipping cream, whipped

FROSTING
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 1-1/2 cups heavy whipping cream, whipped
- 1 jar (10 to 12 oz.) apricot preserves
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted

In a large bowl, beat eggs, sugar and vanilla on high speed until thick and lemon-colored. Combine flour, almonds, baking powder and salt; gradually fold into egg mixture alternately with whipped cream.

Transfer to two greased and floured 9-in. round baking pans. Bake at 350° for 22-28 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

In a large bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar and salt until smooth. Beat in extract. Fold in whipped cream.

Cut each cake horizontally into two layers. Place bottom layer on serving plate; spread with 1 cup frosting. Top with another cake layer; spread with half of the preserves. Repeat layers. Frost sides of cake; decorate top edge with remaining frosting. Sprinkle with almonds.

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// CHOCOLATE TRUFFLE CAKE

PREP: 35 MIN. + CHILLING
BAKE: 25 MIN. + COOLING YIELD: 16 SERVINGS

- 2-1/2 cups 2% milk
- 1 cup butter, cubed
- 8 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2-2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt

FILLING:
- 6 Tbsp. butter, cubed
- 4 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 2-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

GANACHE:
- 10 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 2/3 cup heavy whipping cream

In a large saucepan, cook the milk, butter and chocolate over low heat until melted. Remove from the heat; let stand for 10 minutes.

In a large bowl, beat eggs and vanilla; stir in chocolate mixture until smooth. Combine flour, sugar, baking soda and salt; gradually beat into mixture (batter will be thin). Transfer to three greased and floured 9-in. round baking pans. Bake at 325° for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

For filling, in a small saucepan, melt butter and chocolate. Stir in confectioners' sugar and cream until smooth.

For ganache, place chocolate in a small bowl. In a small saucepan, bring cream just to a boil. Pour over chocolate; whisk until smooth. Cool, stirring occasionally, until ganache reaches a spreading consistency.

Set aside 1/2 cup filling for garnish. Place one cake layer on a serving plate; spread with half of the remaining filling. Repeat layers. Top with remaining cake layer. Spread ganache over top and sides of cake. Decorate with reserved filling. Store in refrigerator.

// RASPBERRY CHOCOLATE TORTE

PREP: 40 MIN. BAKE: 20 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup baking cocoa

GLAZE:
- 1/4 cup boiling water
- 4 tsp. raspberry gelatin
- 2 Tbsp. seedless raspberry jam

TOPPING
- 2 cups (12 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 cartons (8 oz. each) frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 2 cups fresh raspberries

Line a greased 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan with waxed paper; grease paper. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine flour and cocoa; gradually beat into creamed mixture. Transfer to prepared pan.

Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before inverting onto a wire rack to cool completely. Carefully remove waxed paper.

For glaze, stir water and gelatin until dissolved. Stir in jam. Brush evenly over bottom of cake. Trim edges; cut cake widthwise into thirds.

For topping, in a microwave-safe bowl, melt chips; stir until smooth. Fold in half of the whipped topping until blended; fold in remaining whipped topping (mixture will be thick).

Place one cake layer on a serving platter; spread with 3/4 cup topping. Repeat layers; top with remaining cake. Frost and decorate with raspberries and remaining topping.

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// CHOCOLATE TOFFEE CAKE

PREP: 25 MIN. BAKE: 55 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) milk chocolate English toffee bits
- 1 cup (6 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar

CAKE:
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1-1/4 cups packed brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1-1/4 cups buttermilk

CARAMEL ICING
- 1/4 cup butter, cubed
- 2 tsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 can (5 oz.) evaporated milk
- 1 cup packed brown sugar

Combine the toffee bits, chips and brown sugar; set aside.

In a large bowl, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition (mixture will appear curdled). Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda; add to the creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk, beating well after each addition.

Pour a third of the batter into a greased and floured 10-in. fluted tube pan. Sprinkle with a third of toffee mixture. Repeat layers twice. Bake at 350° for 55-65 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near center comes out clean.

Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to wire rack to cool completely. For icing, in a small saucepan, melt butter. Stir in flour until smooth; gradually add evaporated milk and brown sugar. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 4-5 minutes or until thickened. Cool. Drizzle over cake.

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truffle cake with candy cane cream

Cristi Kirkham // WEST JORDAN, UT

You can't help but get into the holiday spirit with one bite of this chocolate delight, decorated with a dollop of creamy peppermint topping.

chocolate raspberry tunnel cake

Ed Leland // VAN WERT, OH

Slice into this moist cake and get ready for a wonderful surprise. The fluffy raspberry filling in the "tunnel" gives this chocolate cake its tasty twist.

chocolate-strawberry celebration cake

Nora Fitzgerald // SEVIERVILLE, TN

"I have some great 'from-scratch' recipes, but this one uses a boxed mix with plenty of doctoring. As a groom's cake, it gets more attention than the wedding cake!"

white chocolate raspberry torte

Martha Schwartz // SARASOTA, FL

"We grow raspberries, and this is one of my favorite ways to use them. Whenever I serve this scrumptious torte, I get oohs and aahs."

CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY // TUNNEL CAKE

PREP: 50 MIN. BAKE: 45 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

2/3 cup butter, softened
1-2/3 cups sugar
3 eggs
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
2/3 cup baking cocoa
1-1/4 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1-1/3 cups 2% milk

FILLING:
2 pkg. (3 oz. each) cream cheese, softened
1 can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk
1/3 cup lemon juice
1/2 tsp. almond extract
2 drops red food coloring, optional
1 carton (12 oz.) frozen whipped topping, thawed, divided
1 cup fresh raspberries
Lemon peel strips and additional fresh raspberries, optional

Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine flour, cocoa, baking powder and soda; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk, beating well after each addition. Transfer to a greased and floured 10-in. tube pan. Bake at 350° for 45-55 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Cool 10 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack to cool completely. Cut a 1-in. slice off top of cake; set aside. Hollow out the bottom portion of cake, leaving a 1-in. shell. Cube the removed cake to measure 1 cup; set aside. (Save remaining cake for another use.)

Beat cream cheese until fluffy. Gradually beat in milk, lemon juice, extract and food coloring if desired. Fold in 1 cup whipped topping. Set aside 1 cup cream cheese mixture; fold berries and reserved cake cubes into remaining mixture. Fill tunnel with cake cube mixture; replace top.

Spread reserved cream cheese mixture over top of cake to within 1 in. of edge. Frost top edge and sides of cake with remaining whipped topping. Garnish with lemon peel and additional berries if desired. Chill

TRUFFLE CAKE WITH // CANDY CANE CREAM

PREP: 35 MIN. BAKE: 40 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 16 SERVINGS

1 cup graham cracker crumbs
1 cup chopped pecans, toasted and coarsely ground
2 Tbsp. plus 3/4 cup sugar divided
1/4 cup butter, melted
16 oz. semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
1 cup heavy whipping cream
6 eggs
1/3 cup all-purpose flour

CREAM
1 cup heavy whipping cream
2 Tbsp. sugar
4 candy canes, finely ground
1/4 to 1/2 tsp. peppermint extract, optional

Combine the cracker crumbs, pecans, 2 Tbsp. sugar and butter; press onto the bottom and 1-1/2 in. up the sides of a greased 9-in. springform pan. Place pan on a baking sheet.

In a large saucepan, cook chocolate and cream over low heat until chocolate is melted. Cool. In a large bowl, beat eggs, flour and remaining sugar on high speed until thick and lemon-colored, about 5 minutes. Gradually beat in chocolate mixture.

Pour batter into prepared crust. Bake at 325° for 40-45 minutes or until center is almost set. Cool on wire rack for 10 minutes. Carefully run a knife around edge of the pan to loosen; cool 1 hour longer. Refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight.

Beat cream and sugar until stiff peaks form; fold in ground candy and extract if desired. Serve with cake.

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WHITE CHOCOLATE // RASPBERRY TORTE

PREP: 1 HOUR BAKE: 30 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

3/4 cup butter
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
1 cup white baking chips, melted and cooled
1 tsp. vanilla extract
3 cups cake flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 cup buttermilk

FILLING:
2 cups fresh or frozen raspberries
3/4 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
3 Tbsp. cornstarch

FROSTING
1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1 cup vanilla or white chips, melted and cooled
1 carton (12 oz.) frozen whipped topping, thawed
Fresh raspberries optional

Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in melted chips and vanilla. Combine flour, baking powder and soda; add to creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk, beating well after each addition.

Transfer to two greased and floured 9-in. round baking pans. Bake at 350° for 28-32 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

In a small saucepan, bring raspberries and water to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 5 minutes. Strain raspberry mixture; discard seeds. Cool. In the same pan, combine sugar and cornstarch; stir in raspberry puree until smooth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Cool. Spread between cake layers.

In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Beat in melted chips; fold in whipped topping. Spread over top and sides of cake. Pipe frosting over top edge of cake and garnish with berries if desired. Store in refrigerator

CHOCOLATE-STRAWBERRY // CELEBRATION CAKE

PREP: 30 MIN. BAKE: 30 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

1 pkg. (18-1/4 oz.) chocolate cake mix
1 pkg. (3.9 oz.) instant chocolate pudding mix
4 eggs
1 cup (8 oz.) sour cream
3/4 cup water
1/4 cup canola oil
4 oz. semisweet chocolate, melted

FROSTING:
2 cups butter, softened
4 cups confectioners' sugar
3/4 cup baking cocoa
1/2 cup 2% milk

GARNISHES:
2 oz. semisweet chocolate, melted
1 lb. fresh strawberries, hulled

GANACHE:
4 oz. semisweet chocolate chopped
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

Combine the first seven ingredients; beat on low speed for 30 seconds. Beat on medium for 2 minutes. Transfer to two greased and floured 9-in. round baking pans.

Bake at 350° for 28-32 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely. Beat the butter, confectioners' sugar and cocoa until blended; add milk and beat until smooth. Spread frosting between layers and over top and sides of cake.

Pipe or spoon melted chocolate onto waxed paper in decorative designs; let stand until set. Arrange strawberries on top of cake. For ganache, place chocolate in a small bowl. Heat cream just to a boil; pour over chocolate; whisk until smooth. Drizzle over top of cake, allowing ganache to drape down the sides. Top with chocolate garnishes.

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brittle torte

Phyllis Murphey // LOWER LAKE, CA

"This was my mom's favorite special-occasion cake. When I was in high school, she often asked me to make it for her. The homemade brittle gives it a nice crunch."

"give me s'more" cake

Katie Lemery // CUDDEBACKVILLE, NY

Bring a yummy campfire favorite to your table—minus the sticky marshmallow fingers. Kids and kids-at-heart will love this new take on the time-honored treat.

lemon-rosemary layer cake

Mary Fraser // SURPRISE, AZ

Tall and impressive, this unique dessert is a treat for the senses with flecks of lemon peel and fresh rosemary. Just wait till you taste it!

chocolate banana cream cake

Susie Schueller // GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS, OH

"My inspiration for this cake came from my desire to create a dessert combining my dad's love for cake, my mom's love for chocolate and my love for bananas."

"GIVE ME S'MORE" CAKE

PREP: 50 MIN. BAKE: 20 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2-3/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 1 can (12 oz.) evaporated milk

MARSHMALLOW FROSTING
- 4 egg whites
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1-1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 cups miniature semisweet chocolate chips, divided

Line two 9-in. round baking pans with waxed paper and grease the paper; set aside. In a large bowl, cream the shortening, butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine cracker crumbs and baking powder; add to the creamed mixture alternately with milk, beating well after each addition.

Transfer to prepared pans. Bake at 350° for 18-22 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

In a large heavy saucepan, combine the egg whites, sugar and cream of tartar over low heat. With a hand mixer, beat on low speed for 1 minute. Continue beating on low over low heat until frosting reaches 160°, about 8-10 minutes. Pour into a large bowl; add vanilla. Beat on high until stiff peaks form, about 7 minutes.

Place a cake layer on a serving plate; spread with 2/3 cup frosting and sprinkle with half of chips. Top with remaining cake layer. Frost top and sides of cake; sprinkle with remaining chips.

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BRITTLE TORTE

PREP: 50 MIN. BAKE: 50 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

- 8 eggs, separated
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. cream of tartar

TOPPING:
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 tsp. instant coffee granules
- 1 tsp. baking soda

WHIPPED CREAM
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract

Let eggs stand at room temperature 30 minutes. Combine flour, sugar and salt. Whisk egg yolks, water, lemon juice and vanilla; add to flour mixture. Beat until blended.

Beat egg whites and cream of tartar until soft peaks form; fold into batter. Spoon into an ungreased 10-in. tube pan. Cut through batter with a knife to remove air pockets. Bake on lowest oven rack at 325° for 50-60 minutes or until top springs back when touched. Immediately invert pan; cool completely.

For topping, grease a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. pan. In a heavy saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup, water and coffee granules. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cook, without stirring, to 300° (hard-crack stage). Remove from heat; stir in baking soda. Immediately pour into prepared pan. Stretch brittle in pan with two forks; cool. Break into pieces. Beat cream until it begins to thicken. Add sugar and vanilla; beat until stiff peaks form.

Unmold cake; cut into four layers. Place bottom layer on a plate; top with 1/2 cup whipped cream. Repeat layers twice; top with remaining layer. Frost top and sides of cake with remaining cream. Sprinkle with brittle.

CHOCOLATE BANANA LAYER CAKE

PREP: 30 MIN. BAKE: 20 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 12 SERVINGS

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1-1/4 cups sugar
- 2 eggs, separated
- 1-1/2 cups mashed ripe bananas (about 3 medium)
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt

FILLING/FROSTING
- 1-1/2 cups cold whole milk
- 1 pkg. (3.4 oz.) instant banana cream pudding mix
- 1 can (16 oz.) chocolate frosting
- 2 medium firm bananas, sliced
- 3 Tbsp. lemon juice

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks; mix well. Beat in the bananas, sour cream and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; add to the creamed mixture and beat well.

In a small bowl, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Fold into batter. Transfer to two greased and floured 9-in. round baking pans. Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

For filling, in a small bowl, whisk milk and pudding mix for 2 minutes. Let stand for 2 minutes or until soft-set. Cover and refrigerate until chilled.

In a small bowl, beat frosting until light and fluffy. Place bananas in a small bowl; toss with lemon juice.

Place one cake layer on a serving plate; spread with 3 Tbsp. frosting. Stir pudding; spread half over frosting. Top with half of bananas and remaining cake layer. Repeat frosting, filling and banana layers. Frost sides and decorate top edge of cake with remaining frosting. Store in refrigerator.

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LEMON-ROSEMARY LAYER CAKE

PREP: 20 MIN. BAKE: 25 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 16 SERVINGS

- 1 cup plus 2 Tbsp. butter, softened
- 2-1/2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 egg yolk
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 1-1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. plus 1/8 tsp. baking soda
- 1-1/2 cups (12 oz.) sour cream
- 6 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 3 tsp. grated lemon peel
- 3 tsp. minced fresh rosemary

FROSTING:
- 2 pkg. (8 oz. each) cream cheese, softened
- 8-1/4 cups confectioners' sugar
- 3 tsp. grated lemon peel
- 2-1/4 tsp. lemon juice

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs and yolk, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda; add to the creamed mixture alternately with sour cream, beating well after each addition. Beat in the lemon juice, peel and rosemary.

Transfer to three greased and floured 9-in. round baking pans. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

For frosting, in a large bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Add the confectioners' sugar, lemon peel and juice; beat until smooth.

Spread frosting between layers and over top and sides of cake. Refrigerate leftovers.

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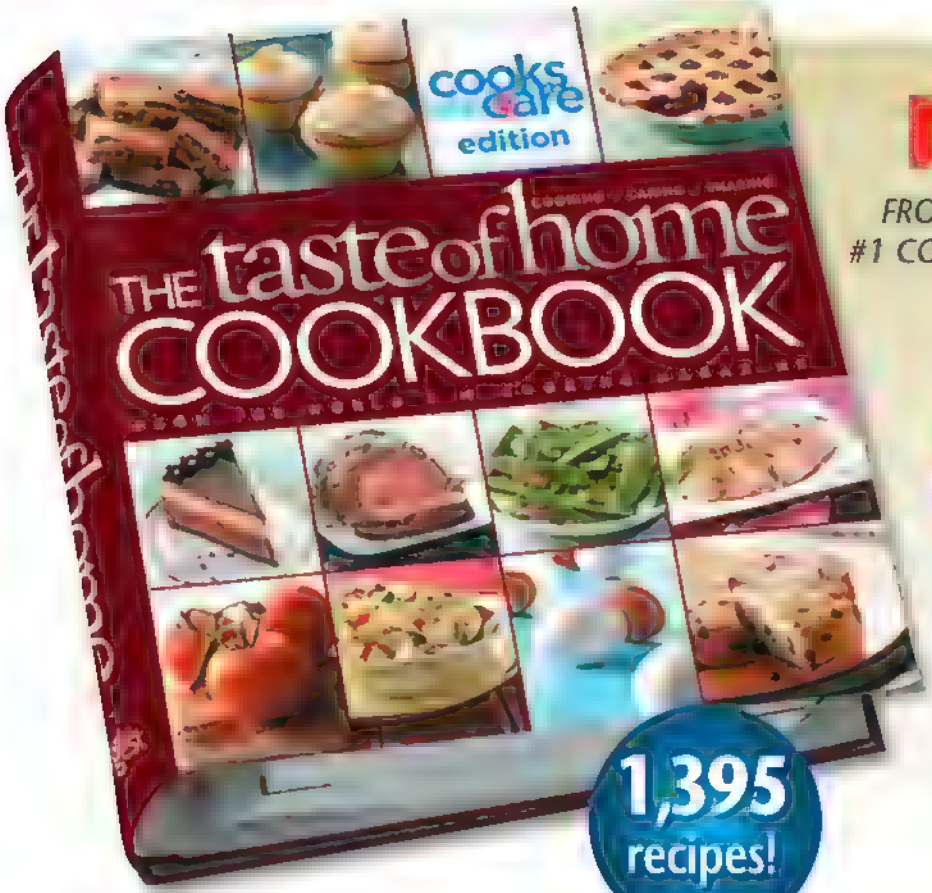

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I am still convinced that a good, simple, homemade cookie is preferable to all the store-bought cookies one can find. James Beard

the very best CHRISTMAS COOKIES...ever!

If there's one thing our staff is passionate about, it's Christmas cookies! While planning which *Taste of Home* recipes to bring back for this issue, everyone had a holiday cookie they were rooting for. After much discussion (it was so hard to choose!), here are our all-time favorites from our readers. May they bring smiles by the sleigh-full!

* * *

pecan meltaways

"These sugared, nut-filled balls are a tradition at our house at Christmastime, but they are great any time of the year. You won't be able to eat just one!"

Alberta McKay // BARTLESVILLE, OK

PREP: 15 MIN. + CHILLING
BAKE: 10 MIN./BATCH
YIELD: 4 DOZEN

1 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp. salt
3/4 cup chopped pecans
Additional confectioners' sugar

In a large bowl, cream the butter, confectioners' sugar and vanilla until light and fluffy. Combine flour and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in pecans. Refrigerate until chilled.

Roll into 1-in. balls and place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until set. Roll warm cookies in additional confectioners' sugar; cool completely on wire racks. Roll cooled cookies again in confectioners' sugar.

give them a delicious homemade gift

PHILADELPHIA NEW YORK CHEESECAKE

Prep Time: 15 min. • Total Time: 5 hours 25 min. (incl. refrigeration) • Makes: 16 servings.

WHAT YOU NEED:

20 OREO Cookies, finely crushed (about 2¼ cups)
3 Tbsp. butter or margarine, melted
5 pkg. (8 oz. each) PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese, softened
1 cup sugar
3 Tbsp. flour
1 Tbsp. vanilla
1 cup BREAKSTONE'S or KNUDSEN Sour Cream
4 eggs
1 can (21 oz.) cherry pie filling

HEAT oven to 325°F.

LINE 13x9 inch pan with foil. Mix crumbs and butter; press onto bottom of pan.

BEAT cream cheese, sugar, flour and vanilla with mixer until blended. Add sour cream; mix well. Add eggs, 1 at a time, mixing on low after each just until blended. Pour over crust.

BAKE 40 min. or until center is almost set. Cool completely. Refrigerate 4 hours. Top with pie filling.

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Katie Brown is a Lifestyle Expert and Host of Public Television's *Katie Brown Workshop*.

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE TORTE

Prep Time: 20 mins plus refrigeration • Makes: 16 servings.

WHAT YOU NEED:

37 NILLA Wafers, divided
4 squares BAKER'S Semi-Sweet Chocolate, divided
2 pkg. (3.9 oz. each) JELL-O Chocolate Instant Pudding
2 cups plus 2 Tbsp. cold milk, divided
1 tub (8 oz.) COOL WHIP Whipped Topping, thawed, divided
1 pkg. (8 oz.) PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese, softened
¼ cup sugar
¾ cup fresh raspberries

MAKE IT:

STAND 16 wafers around inside edge of 9-inch round pan lined with plastic wrap. Melt 3 chocolate squares as directed on package.

BEAT pudding mixes and 2 cups milk with whisk 2 min. Add melted chocolate; mix well. Stir in 1 cup COOL WHIP; pour into prepared pan. Beat cream cheese, sugar and remaining milk with mixer until well blended.

STIR in 1 cup of the remaining COOL WHIP; spread over pudding. Top with remaining wafers. Refrigerate 3 hours. Meanwhile, shave remaining chocolate squares into curls.

INVERT torte onto plate. Remove pan and plastic wrap. Top torte with remaining COOL WHIP, berries and chocolate curls.

PHILADELPHIA ORIGINAL JELL-O COOL WHIP Baker's

FOR MORE GREAT HOLIDAY RECIPES VISIT DESSERT.COM

candy cane cookies

Kids will love these festive candy cane-shaped cookies with their luscious almond flavor and peppermint sprinkles.

Tammy Schenk // HARLOWTON, MT

PREP: 25 MIN.
BAKE: 10 MIN./BATCH + COOLING
YIELD: 3 DOZEN

1 cup butter, softened

1 cup confectioners' sugar

1 egg

1-1/2 tsp. almond extract

2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp. salt

Red food coloring

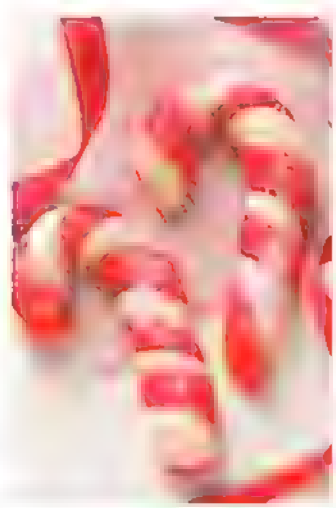
1/2 cup crushed peppermint candy canes

1/2 cup sugar

In a small bowl, cream butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and extract. Combine flour and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well.

Divide dough in half; add 6-7 drops of food coloring to one half. Shape tablespoonfuls of each color of dough into 4-in. ropes. Place ropes side by side; lightly press ends together and twist. Place on ungreased baking sheets, curve to form canes.

Bake at 375° for 9-12 minutes or until lightly browned. Combine crushed candy canes and sugar; immediately sprinkle over cookies. Cool for 2 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool.



walnut horn cookies

It only takes a few ingredients to make these elegant walnut horns.

Loretta Stokes // PHILADELPHIA, PA

PREP: 40 MIN. BAKE: 35 MIN./BATCH
YIELD: 4 DOZEN

1 cup plus 1 tsp. butter, softened, divided

1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened

3 cups all-purpose flour

4 cups ground walnuts

1-1/4 cups sugar, divided

1/2 cup 2% milk

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1/8 tsp. salt

In a large bowl, beat 1 cup butter and the cream cheese until light and fluffy. Gradually add flour, beating until mixture forms a ball. Divide dough into four portions, roll each into a 12-in. circle.

The dough for the Walnut Horn Cookies can be made ahead of time and refrigerated for up to 7 days.

Melt the remaining butter. In a large bowl, combine the walnuts, 3/4 cup sugar, milk, vanilla, salt and melted butter. Spread over circles. Cut each into 12 wedges. Roll up wedges, starting from the wide ends.

Place point side down on greased baking sheets. Curve ends to form crescents. Bake at 325° for 35-40 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to wire racks.

Place remaining sugar in a small shallow bowl. Roll warm cookies in the sugar.

Regional Baking Traditions for the Holidays

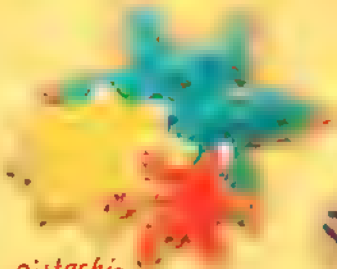
Mount Rainier Macaroons

Wintermint Wafers

Almond Butter Buckeyes

Apple Cider Buttons

Gold Rush Bars



Pistachio Biscochitos

Chocolate Butter Pecans

Bananas Foster Bars

REAL BUTTER
Pure and Natural

It all begins with REAL Butter.

Every part of the country has its own holiday cookie traditions. But whether you live in San Francisco or Savannah, one thing is sure to be the same. The best-tasting cookies start with the pure and natural flavor of **REAL Butter**. It's what gives holiday cookies the richness and texture that makes them favorites year after year. And it's an all-natural ingredient you can feel good about.

For holiday cookie recipes inspired by regional traditions throughout the U.S., visit **butterlicious.com/tasteofhome**.

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holiday sugar cookies

Cream cheese helps create the rich flavor of these melt-in-your-mouth cookies. This is the only sugar cookie recipe you will ever need

Julie Brunette // GREEN BAY, WI

PREP: 40 MIN.
BAKE: 10 MIN./BATCH + COOLING
YIELD: 4 DOZEN

1 cup butter, softened
1 pkg. (3 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1 cup sugar
1 egg yolk
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 tsp. almond extract
2-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. baking soda
Tinted frosting, coarse sugar and/or colored sugar

In a large bowl, cream the butter, cream cheese and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk and extracts. Combine the flour, salt and baking soda; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 3 hours or until easy to handle.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 2-1/2-in. cookie cutter. Place 1 in. apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Cool for 2 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks. Decorate as desired.

COOKIE ORNAMENTS

Want to make the cookie ornaments pictured here? Food Stylist Suzanne Breckenridge adapted the Holiday Sugar Cookies recipe to create these pretty baubles. Here's how:

"To firm up the batter, I added an extra 1-3/4 cup of flour. After cutting out the cookies and placing on a baking sheet, I poked a hole in each one so the cookie can hang. If the hole fills up during baking, carefully twist a toothpick in the correct spot to make the hole.

"I frosted the cookie ornaments with royal icing and used a pastry bag with a #5 tip to apply the dots and dashes. For the final touch, I sprinkled sanding sugar over the top. Have fun!"

lemon angel wings

The light, lemony flavor of these delicate treats is wonderful. Their unique shape looks impressive on a cookie tray.

Charlotte Westfall // HOUSTON, TX

PREP: 20 MIN. + CHILLING
BAKE: 20 MIN./BATCH + COOLING
YIELD: 3 DOZEN

1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup cold butter
1/2 cup sour cream
1 tsp. grated lemon peel
10 Tbsp. sugar, divided

Place flour in a large bowl, cut in butter until crumbly. Stir in sour cream and lemon peel until well blended. Place on a piece of waxed paper; shape into a 4-1/2-in. square. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Cut dough into four 2-1/4-in. squares. Place one square on a piece of waxed paper sprinkled with 2 Tbsp. sugar. Cover with another piece of waxed paper. Keep remaining squares refrigerated. Roll out dough into a 12-in. x 5-in. rectangle, turning often to coat both sides with sugar.

Lightly mark center of 12-in. side. Starting with a short side, roll up jelly-roll style to the center mark, peeling paper away while rolling. Repeat rolling from other short side, so the two rolls meet in the center and resemble a scroll.

Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate. Repeat with remaining squares, using 2 Tbsp. sugar for each. Chill for 1 hour.

Unwrap dough and cut into 1/2-in. slices; dip each side in remaining sugar. Place 2 in. apart on foil-lined baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 14 minutes or until golden brown. Turn cookies over; bake 5 minutes longer. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Whole pecans, caramel-like filling and a butter and cream cheese crust make these mini tarts impossible to resist!

pecan goody cups

Janice Hose // HAGERSTOWN, MD

PREP: 35 MIN. + CHILLING
BAKE: 20 MIN./BATCH
YIELD: 4 DOZEN

3/4 cup butter, softened

2 pkg. (3 oz. each) cream cheese, softened

2 cups all-purpose flour

FILLING

1-1/2 cups packed brown sugar

2 eggs

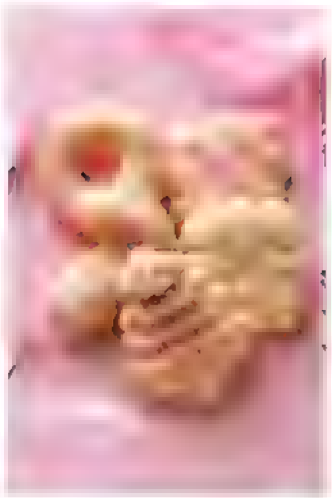
1 Tbsp. butter, melted

48 pecan halves

In a large bowl, beat butter and cream cheese until light and fluffy. Gradually add flour, beating until mixture forms a ball. Cover and refrigerate for 15 minutes. For filling, in a small bowl, combine the brown sugar, eggs and butter

Roll dough into 1-in. balls. Press onto the bottoms and up the sides of greased miniature muffin cups. Spoon filling into cups; top each with a pecan half

Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool for 2-3 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks.



holiday spritz

"I substituted rum extract for vanilla in this classic Christmas recipe, and the end result was a cookie that tastes a lot like eggnog. Delicious!"

Lisa Varner // CHARLESTON, SC

PREP: 30 MIN. BAKE: 10 MIN./BATCH
YIELD: 7 DOZEN

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1 egg
1-1/2 tsp. rum extract
2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp. salt
Colored sugar

In a small bowl, cream butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and extract. Combine flour and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well.

Using a cookie press fitted with the disk of your choice, press cookies 1 in. apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Sprinkle with colored sugar.

Bake at 375° for 6-9 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool for 2 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks.

MORE!

SWEET TREATS
Need more festive holiday cookie ideas? Visit **tasteofhome.com/christmascookies**

This pretty jam-filled cookie takes a little extra effort, but the results are so sweet!

linzer cookies

Jane Pearcy // VERONA, WI

PREP: 20 MIN. + CHILLING
BAKE: 10 MIN./BATCH
YIELD: 3 DOZEN

1-1/4 cups butter, softened
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp. baking cocoa
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/8 tsp. ground cloves
2 cups ground almonds
6 Tbsp. seedless raspberry jam
3 Tbsp. confectioners' sugar

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine the flour, cocoa, salt and spices; gradually add to creamed mixture and mix well. Stir in almonds. Refrigerate for 1 hour or until easy to handle.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 2-1/2-in. round cookie cutter. From the center of half of the cookies, cut out a 1-1/2-in. shape.

Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Spread the bottom of each solid cookie with 1/2 tsp. jam. Sprinkle cutout cookies with confectioners' sugar; carefully place over jam.

gifts in good taste

SHOW YOU CARE WITH HOMEMADE GOODIES FROM THE KITCHEN

cashew brittle

"I started making brittle in the mid-1970s. I tried this recipe, made some modifications and have been using it for 25 years. One year I made over 170 pounds!"

Jim Merchant // VINTON, IA

PREP: 10 MIN.
COOK: 30 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 2-1/4 LBS.

1 Tbsp. plus 1 cup butter, divided

2 cups sugar

1 cup light corn syrup

1 cup water

2-1/2 cups unsalted cashew halves

1/4 tsp. baking soda

Butter a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. pan with 1 Tbsp. butter; set aside.

In a large saucepan, combine the sugar, corn syrup and water. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Reduce heat; cut remaining butter into cubes and carefully stir into syrup. Cook and stir until a candy thermometer reads 280° (soft-crack stage).

Add nuts; cook and stir until candy thermometer reads 295°. Remove from the heat; stir in baking soda. Immediately pour into prepared pan. Cool; break into pieces. Store in an airtight container.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

CASHEW BRITTLE
PECAN CARAMELS
(recipe on p. 62)

{ JIM'S TIP }
Once you start a batch of brittle, don't leave it. Keep stirring constantly. Humidity will make the candy stick together, so cool weather is the best time to make it.

CANDY MAKING TIP:

When purchasing a candy thermometer, look for one with a clear readout and an adjustable clip so it can be attached to the side of a pan. To use the thermometer, stand it upright in the candy syrup so the bulb is completely immersed in the liquid. Do not let the bulb touch the bottom of the pan. Clip it in place.

pecan caramels

"Make a pot of coffee or fix a drink—this takes awhile! It's worth it, though, the recipe is a family favorite and we always get requests for these chewy caramels."

Darrell Brown // LINCOLN, NE

PREP: 30 MIN.
COOK: 40 MIN. + STANDING
YIELD: 4-1/4 LBS.

2 tsp. plus 1 cup butter, divided

1-1/4 cups sugar

1-1/4 cups packed brown sugar

1 cup dark corn syrup

2 cups heavy whipping cream, divided

2 lbs. chopped pecans

1 tsp. vanilla extract

Line a 13-in. x 9-in. pan with foil, grease the foil with 2 tsp. butter and set aside.

In a large heavy saucepan, combine the sugars, corn syrup, 1 cup cream and the remaining butter. Cook and stir over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Bring to a boil. Slowly stir in the remaining cream. Cook, without stirring, until a candy thermometer reads 245° (firm-ball stage).

Remove from the heat; stir in pecans and vanilla. Pour into prepared pan (do not scrape saucepan). Let stand until firm. Using foil, lift candy out of pan. Discard foil; cut candy into 1-in. squares. Wrap individually in waxed paper; twist ends.

triple chocolate fudge

"This recipe makes more than enough creamy fudge to share with family and friends. It's the ultimate gift!"

Linette Shepherd // WILLIAMSTON, MI

PREP: 20 MIN.
COOK: 25 MIN. + CHILLING
YIELD: 6-3/4 LBS.

4 tsp. plus 1/2 cup butter, divided

4-1/2 cups sugar

1 can (12 oz.) evaporated milk

1 tsp. salt

16 oz. German sweet chocolate, chopped

2 cups (12 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips

1 pkg. (11-1/2 oz.) milk chocolate chips

2 jars (7 oz. each) marshmallow creme

4 cups chopped pecans or walnuts, toasted

2 tsp. vanilla extract

Line two 13-in. x 9-in. pans with foil and grease the foil with 4 tsp. butter. In a heavy Dutch oven, combine the sugar, milk, salt and the remaining butter. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Cook, without stirring, until a candy thermometer reads 234° (soft-ball stage).

Remove from the heat. Stir in German sweet chocolate and the chocolate chips until smooth. Fold in the marshmallow creme, pecans and vanilla. Spread into prepared pans.

Refrigerate for 1 hour or until firm. Using foil, lift fudge out of pan. Discard foil, cut fudge into 1-in. squares. Store in airtight containers.

WRAP IT UP

Follow these tips for packaging your food gifts:

- Place waxed paper between layers to avoid making a gooey, sticky mess.
- Pack treats in decorative tins, cute take-out containers or canning jars. Add ribbons or other embellishments.
- Line tins or containers with festive cloth napkins for a burst of color.
- Buy some pretty Christmas plates and fill with candy or cookies to deliver to a neighbor or shut-in.
- Print decorative tags from your computer to let recipients know what candies are inside. Also include a note if they contain nuts for those who are allergic... and don't forget a copy of the recipe!

EDITOR'S NOTE: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil. The thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

LUCKY LEAF tastes like

Every day is a Holiday!

Whether it's a special occasion or a family tradition, Lucky Leaf will make it an event to remember. So at your next gathering, serve the sweet, fresh-picked taste of Lucky Leaf – now with even more fruit.

What does Lucky Leaf taste like to you? Find recipes and more everyday reasons to celebrate at

LuckyLeaf.com

LUCKY LEAF tastes like

Rainy Day Cherry Crisp

2 cans (21 oz.) Lucky Leaf® Cherry Pie Filling
½ cup butter, softened
1 ½ cup quick oats
1 cup brown sugar
½ cup finely chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 350°. Pour two cans of Lucky Leaf Cherry Pie Filling into the bottom of a 9" x 13" pan. Blend softened butter, oatmeal, brown sugar and pecans until the mixture is crumbly; sprinkle the mixture over top of the pie filling. Bake 30 minutes or until golden brown. Makes 12 servings.

NOW with MORE FRUIT

chocolate-covered pretzels

Aimee Worth // FAIR OAKS, CA

PREP: 1 HOUR + CHILLING
YIELD: 20 PRETZELS

12 oz. milk chocolate candy coating disks

20 large sourdough pretzels, divided

Colored sprinkles

12 oz. white candy coating disks

In a microwave, melt milk chocolate; stir until smooth. Dip 10 pretzels in chocolate, allowing excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper. Decorate half of the pretzels with sprinkles. Chill for 10 minutes or until set.

Melt white chocolate; stir until smooth. Dip the remaining pretzels in white chocolate, allowing excess to drip off. Place on waxed paper. Decorate half of the pretzels with sprinkles. Chill for 10 minutes or until set.

Drizzle the plain white-coated pretzels with milk chocolate. Drizzle the plain milk chocolate-coated pretzels with white chocolate. Chill for 10 minutes or until set. Store in an airtight container.

A delicious variation is to replace the pretzels with an 18 oz. package of cream-filled cookies!

— Aimee Worth

caramel corn with nuts

"This caramel corn far surpasses any store-bought variety. Adding mixed nuts makes it extra special. I usually double the recipe for gifting."

Karen Scaglione // MANUET, NY

PREP: 20 MIN. BAKE: 45 MIN.
YIELD: 2-1/2 QT.

10 cups popped popcorn

1 cup packed brown sugar

1/2 cup butter, cubed

1/4 cup dark corn syrup

1/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. baking soda

1/2 cup mixed nuts

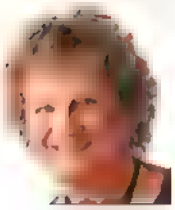
Place popcorn in a large bowl; set aside. In a large heavy saucepan, combine the brown sugar, butter, corn syrup and salt. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture comes to a rolling boil. Cook and stir until candy thermometer reads 238° (soft-ball stage). Remove from the heat; stir in baking soda (mixture will foam). Quickly pour over popcorn and mix well; stir in nuts.

Transfer to two greased 13-in. x 9-in. baking pans. Bake at 200° for 45 minutes, stirring once. Remove from pans and place on waxed paper to cool. Break into clusters. Store in airtight containers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

For more easy holiday gift ideas, be sure to visit **tasteofhome.com/foodgifts**

mmm... marshmallows!



Homemade marshmallows make a fun gift! TOH Food Editor Pat Schmeling shows you how...step by step

OPTIONS ARE ENDLESS!

- **Roll them in:** Candy sprinkles, Colored sugars, Chopped nuts, Crushed candy, Cocoa
- **Dip them in:** Melted chocolate or candy coating
- **Drizzle with:** Caramel or chocolate ice cream topping, Hot fudge
- **Change extract flavors:** Almond, Peppermint, Lemon, Chocolate

homemade marshmallows

"At Christmastime, my grandpa was always busy making marshmallows for family and friends."

Diana Byron // NEW LONDON, OH

PREP: 55 MIN. + STANDING
YIELD: ABOUT 9-1/2 DOZEN

2 tsp. butter

3 envelopes unflavored gelatin

1 cup cold water, divided

2 cups sugar

1 cup light corn syrup

1/8 tsp. salt

1 tsp. clear vanilla extract

Optional toppings: melted chocolate, hot fudge and/or caramel ice cream topping

Optional garnishes: baking cocoa, confectioners' sugar, crushed candies, chopped nuts, colored sugars and/or sprinkles

Line a 13-in. x 9-in. pan with foil and grease the foil with butter; set aside.

In a large metal bowl, sprinkle gelatin over 1/2 cup water; set aside. In a large heavy saucepan, combine the sugar, corn syrup, salt and remaining water. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Cook, without stirring, until a candy thermometer reads 240° (soft-ball stage).

Remove from the heat and gradually add to gelatin. Beat on high speed until mixture is thick and the volume is doubled, about 15 minutes. Beat in vanilla. Spread into prepared pan. Cover and let stand at room temperature for 6 hours or overnight.

Using foil, lift marshmallows out of pan. With a knife or pizza cutter coated with cooking spray, cut into 1-in. squares. Dip or drizzle marshmallows with toppings if desired; coat with garnishes as desired. Roll other marshmallows in the garnishes of your choice. Store in an airtight container in a cool dry place.

①

With mixer on low speed, stream hot cooked syrup slowly into bowl, combining it gradually with the softened gelatin.

②

Beat on high speed until mixture is thick and volume has doubled—about 15 minutes—before adding vanilla.

③

Spread onto foil-lined pan. Using foil, lift marshmallows out of pan and cut into 1-inch squares with a knife or pizza cutter coated with cooking spray.

"VEGETABLES ARE INTERESTING BUT LACK A SENSE OF PURPOSE WHEN UNACCOMPANIED BY A GOOD CUT OF MEAT"

–FRAN LEBOWITZ, AUTHOR/HUMORIST

MAIN EVENT

HOLIDAY DINNERS DESERVE NO LESS THAN OVEN-ROASTED PERFECTION

roast pork with apples & onions

…onions and sweet …apples …epitomize this most … favorite …

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Georgia-Pacific

THE EASY & ELEGANT NEW YEAR'S BRUNCH

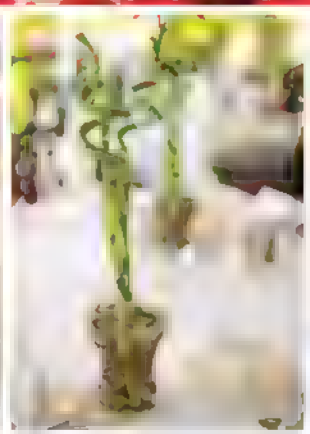
There's nothing like a laid-back gathering with family and friends to start the new year off on a warm note. These clever and surprisingly simple ideas let you forgo formality without sacrificing style.

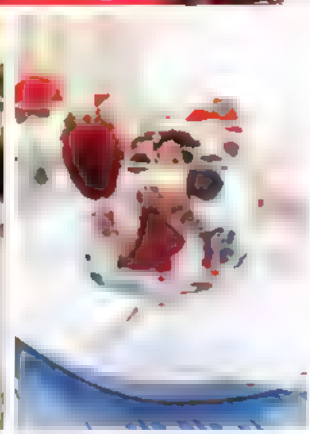
E-mail your invites to set the casual tone. Look for a Web site that offers party planning tools you can use as well as attractive invitations.

Keep it simple. Set a no-fuss, elegant table with **Vanity Fair® premium plates** and utensils wrapped in soft, beautifully embossed **Vanity Fair® napkins** tied with a pretty ribbon or cord.

Serve a better-for-you buffet. Almost everyone resolves to eat healthier come January 1. Make smart substitutions like whole-grain toast or buckwheat pancakes and set up a parfait station with yogurt, fresh fruit, granola and more.

Share your good fortune. Use lucky bamboo plants at each place setting or cluster a few together to create an eye-catching centerpiece. After the meal, give one to each guest with best wishes for the year ahead.





Vanity Fair

For more entertaining tips and ideas, visit VanityFairNapkins.com.

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sunday's best chicken

"Sunday dinners are especially important to our family, and everyone loves when I make this old-fashioned chicken recipe."

Amy Jenkins // MESA, AZ

PREP: 40 MIN.
BAKE: 2 1/4 HOURS + STANDING
YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

2 to 3 medium lemons
2 fresh rosemary sprigs
1 roasting chicken (6 to 7 lbs.)
1 Tbsp. olive oil
2 Tbsp. minced fresh rosemary
1 Tbsp. coarsely ground pepper
1-1/2 tsp. salt

Finely grate the peel from the lemons to measure 2 Tbsp.; set aside. Coarsely chop 2 lemons; place chopped lemons and rosemary sprigs in the chicken cavity. Save remaining lemon for another use.

Place chicken on a rack in a shallow roasting pan; brush with oil. Combine the minced rosemary, pepper, salt and lemon peel; rub over chicken.

Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 2-1/4 to 2-3/4 hours or until a meat thermometer reads 180°, basting occasionally with drippings. (Cover loosely with foil if chicken browns too quickly.)

Let stand for 15 minutes before carving. Discard lemons and rosemary sprigs.

beef roast au poivre with caramelized onions

Ground chilies and peppercorns spice up this robust roast. The aroma is out of this world!

Elaine Sweet // DALLAS, TX

PREP: 30 MIN. + CHILLING
BAKE: 1 HOUR + STANDING
YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

2 Tbsp. each whole black and pink peppercorns or 1/4 cup whole black peppercorns
3 dried chipotle chilies, stems removed
1 Tbsp. coriander seeds
1 Tbsp. dried minced onion
1 Tbsp. dried thyme
1-1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. dried orange peel
3 Tbsp. steak sauce
1 beef tri-tip roast (2 to 3 lbs.)

ONIONS
4 large onions, thinly sliced
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1/2 cup chardonnay or other white wine
2 tsp. dried thyme
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/8 tsp. salt
2 Tbsp. minced fresh parsley

Place the peppercorns, chilies and coriander in a blender. Cover and process until coarsely ground. Stir in the onion, thyme, salt and orange peel.

Rub steak sauce and seasoning mixture over roast; cover and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight.

Place roast on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Bake, uncovered, at 425° for 1 to 1-1/2 hours or until meat reaches desired doneness (for medium-rare, a meat thermometer should read 145°; medium, 160°; well-done, 170°).

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, cook onions in oil over low heat for 30-35 minutes or until golden brown, stirring frequently. Stir in wine and bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cook and stir for 1-2 minutes or until liquid is evaporated. Stir in the thyme, pepper and salt.

Transfer meat to a warm serving platter. Let stand for 10 minutes before slicing. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve with onions.

ham with orange-apricot sauce

"I'm always taking dishes to buffets and wanted to bring a great ham, so I came up with this tasty recipe with a special sauce."

Shirley Hewitt // MILWAUKIE, OR

PREP: 10 MIN. BAKE: 1 1/2 HOURS
YIELD: 15 SERVINGS (2-1/4 CUPS SAUCE)

1 fully cooked spiral-sliced ham (6 to 7 lbs.)
1 cup thawed orange juice concentrate
1 cup sugar
1 cup dried apricots, chopped
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup dried cranberries
3 Tbsp. dried currants

Place ham on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Cover and bake at 325° for 1-1/2 to 2 hours or until a meat thermometer reads 140°.

In a large saucepan, combine juice concentrate, sugar, apricots, water, cranberries and currants. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 3-5 minutes or until slightly thickened. Serve with ham.

CLOSE TO HOME

CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE AROUND THE TASTE OF HOME TABLE

MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

Grandma's legacy is wrapped in wonder

Carrie J. Gamble

Ever since I can remember, I feel the "magic" of Christmas, which I'm quite certain I inherited from my grandmother. The delectable aroma that fills my kitchen wafts warm holiday memories of her as I bake Nut and Poppy Seed Rolls, a Hungarian bread she always made as a special treat.

When Grandmother was in her late 70s, she wrote down some of her memories, including a few from Christmas in 1918, when she was 9 years old.

"I went to a one-room schoolhouse," Grandmother recalled. "We had our Christmas program the afternoon of December 24. Then wonder of wonders, we heard sleigh bells, and Santa Claus came bounding in with his pack! He presented each child with a 1/2 pound of chocolates.

"When mother put us to bed that night, we were full of delicious anticipation. My three brothers and I slept in a room above the kitchen, where it was warm. We had no central heat.

"In the morning, we crept down the stairs, and there was the Christmas tree—a cedar cut down from the woods. It was so beautiful in our eyes! All of the lit candles made it look magical!

"Beside the tree was a sled, our first American Flyer. And under the tree were treats of oranges, nuts, dates, figs and candy.

"On Christmas night, we stood before the candlelit tree and in German sang *Silent Night—Stille nacht, heilige nacht*...

"To this day, when I smell candle wax, I feel the mystery and expectation of those childhood Christmases."

Every year I, too, experience this magical feeling. And I joyfully carry on Grandmother's tradition of baking the Christmas bread!

Grandma's Nut Rolls recipe on p. 22.

Linda Harrington & Elsie Laurenzo Palmer

"Mom cooked most everything from scratch, and like all Italians, never used recipes."

—LINDA HARRINGTON// HUDSON, NH

"Are you hungry? Have you eaten yet?" Those are the first words any Italian will utter when you visit their home.

My mother, **Elsie Laurenzo Palmer**, from Mechanicville, NY, was no different. Mom, who's 100% Italian, used to say, "We always have enough food for anyone who comes to visit."

"Food" often meant a traditional Italian meal. Our holiday turkey featured Mom's incredible sausage stuffing, and there was always plenty of homemade Italian bread and zesty Lemon Broccoli with Garlic. The first thing my husband, Jim, noticed when he met me was the constant aroma of garlic and Italian spices on our back porch.

No holiday was complete without Iced Anise Cookies, or *Taralucci*. I'd help frost them and put the sprinkles on top.

After my sister, brother and I started school, Mom worked as an executive secretary at a paper company. My dad, Louis, was a factory worker. As the oldest child, I was responsible for making dinner. On weekends, Mom cooked, and I'd watch and help her. That's how I learned to cook.

I've always made Mom's specialties for my own family. Jim and I have three grown daughters and two grandchildren. I even bake goodies for my students. I teach reading in grades six, seven and eight; Jim is a pastor.

I have started writing down recipes for Mom's dishes for our daughters. I give them a few each Christmas. It hasn't been easy trying to calculate a handful of this and a pinch of that!

More than the wonderful taste and aroma of Mom's cooking, I cherish the memories of our family gathered around the dinner table, talking about our heritage. I hope I've passed that tradition on to our girls, too.

RECALL YOUR MOM'S BEST?
Send at least four recipes and background information to **editors@tasteofhome.com**. If we feature your mom's recipes, you'll earn $75

lemon broccoli with garlic

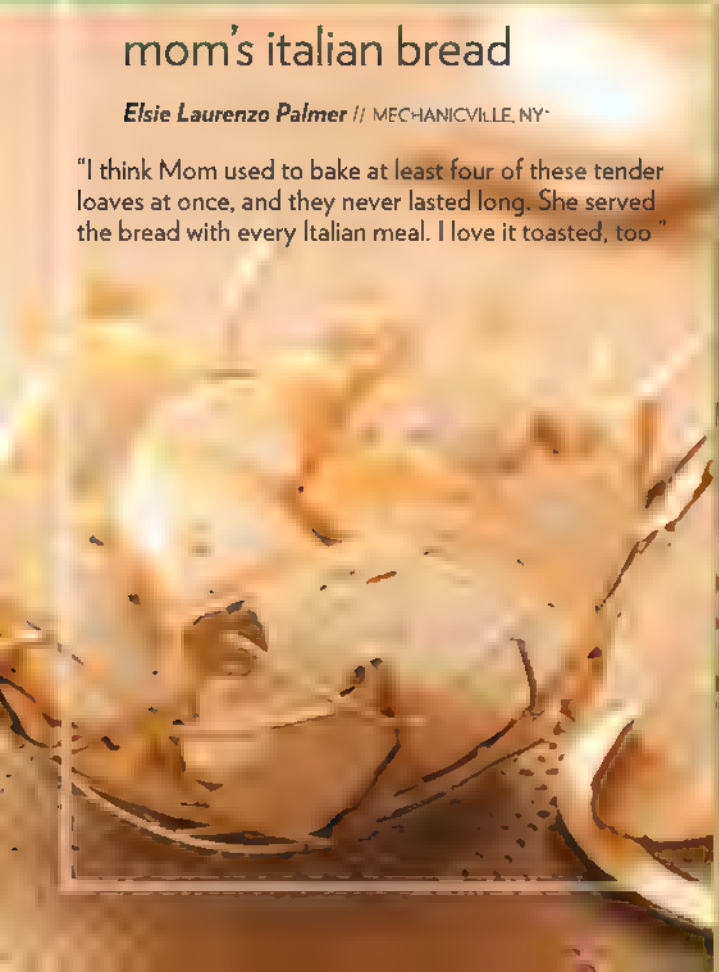
Elsie Laurenzo Palmer // MECHANICVILLE, NY

"This easy recipe is a great way to use up leftover broccoli. That's what Mom did, and I tend to do the same thing."

mom's italian bread

Elsie Laurenzo Palmer // MECHANICVILLE, NY

"I think Mom used to bake at least four of these tender loaves at once, and they never lasted long. She served the bread with every Italian meal. I love it toasted, too."



// LEMON BROCCOLI WITH GARLIC

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 20 MIN
YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

- 1 large bunch broccoli, cut into florets
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper

Place broccoli in a steamer basket; place in a large saucepan over 1 in. of water. Bring to a boil; cover and steam for 6-8 minutes or until crisp-tender.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the remaining ingredients. Immediately place broccoli in ice water. Drain and pat dry. Place in a large bowl. Pour oil mixture over broccoli; toss to coat. Refrigerate until serving.

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// ITALIAN CHRISTMAS TURKEY

PREP: 40 MIN. BAKE: 3-3/4 HOURS + STANDING
YIELD: 16 SERVINGS (12 CUPS STUFFING)

- 1/2 cup butter, cubed
- 1 lb. bulk Italian sausage
- 2 celery ribs, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 pkg. (14 oz.) seasoned stuffing cubes
- 1/4 cup egg substitute
- 2 to 3 cups hot water
- 1 turkey (16 lbs.)
- Salt and pepper to taste

In a large skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Add the sausage, celery and onion; cook and stir until meat is no longer pink. Transfer to a large bowl; stir in the stuffing cubes, egg substitute and enough water to reach desired moistness.

Just before baking, loosely stuff turkey with stuffing. Place remaining stuffing in a greased 2-qt. baking dish; cover and refrigerate. Remove from the refrigerator 30 minutes before baking.

Skewer turkey openings; tie drumsticks together. Place breast side up in a roasting pan. Rub with salt and pepper.

Bake, uncovered, at 325° for 3-3/4 to 4-1/4 hours or until a meat thermometer reads 180° for turkey and 165° for stuffing, basting occasionally with pan drippings. (Cover loosely with foil if turkey browns too quickly.)

Bake additional stuffing, covered, for 25-30 minutes. Uncover; bake 10 minutes longer or until a thermometer reads 160°. Cover turkey and let stand for 20 minutes before removing stuffing and carving turkey. If desired, thicken pan drippings for gravy.

// ICED ANISE COOKIES

PREP: 45 MIN. BAKE: 10 MIN./BATCH
YIELD: 6 DOZEN

- 2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1/4 cup 2% milk
- 2 tsp. anise extract

ICING:
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 3 Tbsp. 2% milk
- 1/2 tsp. lemon extract
- Coarse and colored sugars, optional

In a large bowl, combine 2 cups flour, sugar and baking powder. In a small bowl, whisk the eggs, butter, milk and extract. Stir into dry ingredients until blended. Stir in remaining flour until dough forms a ball. Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth.

Shape dough by rounded teaspoonfuls into thin 6-in. ropes; twist each rope into a "Q" shape. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until set. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool completely.

For icing, in a small bowl, beat butter until fluffy. Add the confectioners' sugar, milk and extract; beat until smooth. Spread over tops of cookies; decorate with sugars if desired.

Nutrition Facts: 1 cookie equals 56 calories, 2 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 14 mg cholesterol, 34 mg sodium, 8 g carbohydrate, trace fiber, 1 g protein. Diabetic Exchange: 1/2 starch.

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// MOM'S ITALIAN BREAD

PREP: 30 MIN. + RISING BAKE: 20 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 2 LOAVES (12 SLICES EACH)

- 1 pkg. (1/4 oz.) active dry yeast
- 2 cups warm water (110° to 115°)
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. salt
- 5-1/2 cups all-purpose flour

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add the sugar, salt and 3 cups flour. Beat on medium speed for 3 minutes. Stir in remaining flour to form a soft dough.

Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Punch dough down. Turn onto a floured surface; divide in half. Shape each portion into a loaf. Place each loaf seam side down on a greased baking sheet. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 30 minutes. With a sharp knife, make four shallow slashes across top of each loaf.

Bake at 400° for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool.

Nutrition Facts: 1 slice equals 106 calories, trace fat (trace saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 197 mg sodium, 22 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 3 g protein. Diabetic Exchange: 1-1/2 starch.

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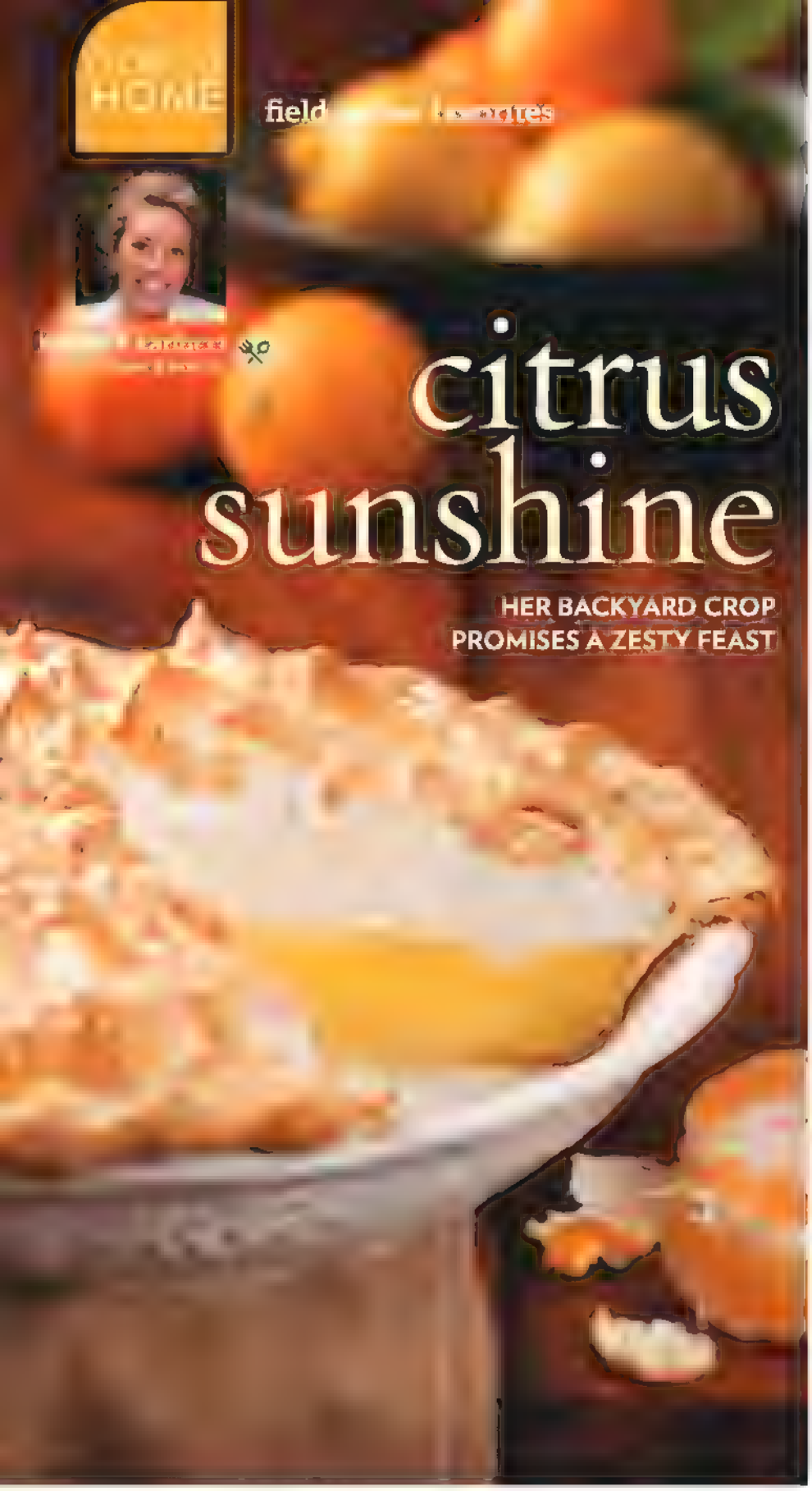
~ QUICK COOKING TIME ~

OUR GIFT TO YOU THIS HOLIDAY

JIMMY DEAN FULLY COOKED SAUSAGE GIVES YOU THE TIME TO FULLY ENJOY YOUR FAMILY.

Shine On



citrus sunshine

HER BACKYARD CROP PROMISES A ZESTY FEAST

PERSONAL:
My husband, Phil, who's retired Navy, and I live in Orange Park, FL. I am a technical writer of airplane books for a government contractor. Our daughter married a sailor, and we have a grandson

PASSIONS:
The scent of citrus blossoms! We have a huge garden, and I can like crazy! Also, I enjoy chatting with my E-friends on the TOH Recipes Forum. Mrs. Lucci_N_FL is my on-line screen name

CAN WE SAY YOUR MIDDLE NAME IS "CITRUS"?
Definitely—I harvest wheelbarrows-full! We get a bumper crop from our backyard Valencia orange, Meyer lemon, white grapefruit, tangerine and Buddha's Hand trees. Our fruit comes ripe around the holidays. Family and friends who visit go home with fresh fruit, homemade jam or marmalade, and a good citrus loaf. Citrus is really versatile (as you'll see from Barbara's recipes on the next page). I squeeze and freeze lots of juice to have on hand for a pound cake, lemon chicken, honey lemon tea and other favorites

BARBARA'S CITRUS TIPS

- To make fresh lemonade, remember 1-1-5—one part lemon juice, one part sugar or sweetener and 5 parts water
- Add citrus zest and/or juice near the end of a recipe's cooking time
- Add a lemon wedge when cooking pasta to serve with recipes like shrimp scampi, an orange wedge for rice to accompany a chicken dish. Remove citrus before serving
- Coming down with a cold? Hot lemon tea with honey is good medicine!
- A few citrus rinds in the garbage disposal will clean it and leave a fresh scent
- And heck, when life gives you lemons . . . you know the rest.

caribbean chicken caesar salad

Barbara Carlucci // ORANGE PARK, FL

"A friend of mine loved the food served at her wedding reception. Afterward, we re-created the menu, including this salad with its refreshing citrus accent."

citrus fish

Barbara Carlucci // ORANGE PARK, FL

"Wolverine John, one of my TOH Recipes Forum E-friends, shared the original recipe for this easy fish entree. The sauce is delicious, and cleanup's a breeze."

upside-down orange french toast

Barbara Carlucci // ORANGE PARK, FL

"I like to serve this for breakfast when we have overnight guests or for a holiday brunch. It gives Florida visitors a taste of sunshine!"

florida citrus meringue pie

Barbara Carlucci // ORANGE PARK, FL

"Why limit a great dessert to just one kind of citrus fruit? Thanks to orange and lemon, this lovely pie packs a bold, sweet-tart flavor."

// CITRUS FISH

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 25 MIN. + CHILLING
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

- 1-1/2 lbs. haddock, cod or halibut fillets
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/3 cup minced fresh parsley
- 2 tsp. grated lemon peel
- 2 tsp. grated orange peel
- 4 tsp. canola oil

Place an 18-in. x 12-in. piece of heavy-duty foil on a large baking sheet. Arrange fillets in a single layer on foil; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Top with onion, parsley, and lemon and orange peel. Drizzle with oil. Top with a second large piece of foil. Bring edges of foil together; crimp to seal, forming a large packet.

Bake at 450° for 15-20 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Open foil carefully to allow steam to escape.

Nutrition Facts: 5 oz. cooked fish equals 208 calories, 6 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 98 mg cholesterol, 193 mg sodium, 4 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 33 g protein. Diabetic Exchanges: 5 lean meat, 1 fat.

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// CARIBBEAN CHICKEN CAESAR SALAD

PREP/TOTAL TIME: 30 MIN.
YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

- 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-in. pieces
- 1/2 cup thawed non-alcoholic pina colada mix, divided
- 1 cup tangerine or mandarin orange segments
- 1 celery rib, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. crushed pineapple
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 4 pitted ripe olives, sliced
- 2 Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 4 tsp. mayonnaise
- 2 tsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 4 cups torn romaine or iceberg lettuce

Combine chicken and 1/4 cup pina colada mix. In a large skillet coated with cooking spray, cook and stir chicken mixture over medium heat until chicken is no longer pink. Remove from the heat; set aside.

Combine the tangerines, celery, pineapple, onion and olives in a large bowl. In a small bowl, combine the lemon juice, mayonnaise, cheese, garlic, salt, pepper and the remaining pina colada mix.

Add chicken and romaine to the tangerine mixture; drizzle with dressing and toss to coat. Serve immediately.

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// FLORIDA CITRUS MERINGUE PIE

PREP: 30 MIN. BAKE: 15 MIN. + CHILLING
YIELD: 8 SERVINGS

- Pastry for single-crust pie (9 in.)
- 1 cup sugar
- 5 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup orange juice
- 4 egg yolks, beaten
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1 tsp. grated lemon peel
- 1 tsp. grated orange peel

MERINGUE:
- 3 egg whites
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 6 Tbsp. sugar

Roll out pastry to fit a 9-in. pie plate. Transfer pastry to pie plate. Trim pastry to 1/2 in. beyond edge of plate; flute edges. Line unpricked pastry with a double thickness of heavy-duty foil. Bake at 450° for 8 minutes. Remove foil; bake 5-7 minutes longer or until lightly browned. Cool on a wire rack. Reduce heat to 350°.

Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, combine the sugar, cornstarch and salt. Gradually stir in water and orange juice until smooth. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until thickened and bubbly. Reduce heat; cook and stir 2 minutes longer (mixture will be thick).

Remove from the heat. Stir a small amount of hot mixture into egg yolks; return all to the pan, stirring constantly. Bring to a gentle boil; cook and stir 2 minutes longer. Remove from the heat. Gently stir in the lemon juice, butter, and lemon and orange peel. Pour into prepared crust.

In a large bowl, beat egg whites and vanilla on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in sugar, 1 Tbsp. at a time, on high until stiff peaks form. Spread over hot filling, sealing edges to crust. Bake at 350° for 12-15 minutes or until meringue is golden brown. Cool on a wire rack for 1 hour. Refrigerate for 1-2 hours before serving.

// UPSIDE-DOWN ORANGE FRENCH TOAST

PREP: 25 MIN. + CHILLING BAKE: 25 MIN.
YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 2 Tbsp. grated orange peel
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 12 slices French bread (3/4 in. thick)
- 4 oz. cream cheese, cubed
- 8 eggs
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 Tbsp. orange liqueur, optional
- 1/2 tsp. butter flavoring

Place butter in a 13-in. x 9-in. baking dish. Combine the sugar, pecans, orange peel and cinnamon; sprinkle over butter. Arrange bread in dish. Dot with cream cheese. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, orange juice, orange liqueur if desired and butter flavoring; pour over bread. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Remove from the refrigerator 30 minutes before baking. Bake, uncovered, at 325° for 25-30 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. To serve, invert slices onto plates.

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A GIVING TRADITION

In honoring her late brother, she brings joy to sick children

I began this tradition because I wanted to do something to make a difference.

— Kathleen Larimer

For **Kathleen Larimer** and her family, Christmas truly is the season for giving. In remembrance of her brother's untimely death, Kathleen now hosts a Christmas tea and asks each guest to bring a gift for the young patients at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis.

"I began this tradition because I wanted to do something to make a difference. I chose St. Jude's because my brother, Nicholas, was a patient there, and he lost his battle with cancer at the age of 6," says Kathleen, who lives in Dayton, OH. "It made sense to gather gifts for Christmas, as my family knew all too well what it was like to spend the holidays in the hospital."

Since 2000, Kathleen, her sister, Marie Evans, and the rest of her family have cooked, baked and collected gifts for the event. The menu includes traditional English fare like scones and tea sandwiches as well as a big crowd-pleaser, Sour Cream Coffee Cake. Kathleen and Marie check *Taste of Home* throughout the year and clip recipes to make for the tea.

"We wanted to provide a bit of joy to children who are staying at the hospital, and to honor the memory of my brother," Kathleen says. "But the tea has become more than that. It's a thank-you to all my friends. Combining that with the toys collected for St. Jude's makes it that much more meaningful."

sour cream coffee cake

This yummy cake is so moist, you won't even need the cup of coffee! Make it for your next get-together—your guests will thank you.

Kathleen Larimer // DAYTON, OH

PREP: 40 MIN.
BAKE: 45 MIN. + COOLING
YIELD: 16 SERVINGS

2/3 cup chopped pecans
2 Tbsp. brown sugar
1-1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

BATTER:
1 cup butter, softened
2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup (8 oz.) sour cream
Confectioners' sugar

In a small bowl, combine the pecans, brown sugar and cinnamon; set aside. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with sour cream.

Pour half of the batter into a greased and floured 10-in. fluted tube pan; sprinkle with half of the pecan mixture. Gently top with remaining batter and pecan mixture.

Bake at 350° for 45-50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack to cool completely. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.

MORE!

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RECIPE INDEX
DECEMBER/JANUARY 2010

taste of home

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MORE!

COOKING FOR 2?

Our Test Kitchen has "paired down" some recipes from this issue. Find their "serves 2" versions at **tasteofhome.com/plus**

Caribbean Chicken Caesar Salad ... 77
Citrus Fish ... 77
Coconut-Mango Mahi Mahi ... 38
Ginger Chicken ... 42
Honey-Lime Red Snapper ... 38
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COSTS ARE PRICE PER SERVING

*RECIPE INCLUDES NUTRITION FACTS

NUTRITION FACTS FOR ALL RECIPES AVAILABLE AT TASTEOFHOME.COM

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Crisco® Roasted Chicken with Vegetables

Crisco® Olive Oil No-Stick Cooking Spray
1 (3 to 3½ lb) fresh whole chicken
3 tbsp. Crisco® Light Olive Oil
1 tsp. salt, ½ tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. dried basil leaves
6–8 small red potatoes, cut into 1" chunks
4 ribs celery, cut into 1" diagonal slices
3 medium carrots, sliced into ¼" rounds
1 medium red onion, cut into ½" wedges

1. HEAT oven to 375°F. Coat 9" baking dish with no-stick cooking spray. Rinse and dry chicken. Place breast side up in dish. Whisk olive oil, salt, pepper, garlic and basil in small bowl. Brush chicken with half the mixture. Roast 30 minutes.
2. COAT 13" x 9" baking dish with no-stick cooking spray. Add vegetables, brush with remaining olive oil mixture and cover with foil.
3. REMOVE chicken from oven. Raise temperature to 450°F. Baste chicken with remaining juices in baking dish. Roast both chicken and vegetables for 20 minutes.
4. REMOVE foil from vegetables and roast with chicken for additional 10 minutes, or until both are tender. Allow to rest for 10 minutes before carving.

Prep time: 30 mins | Cook time: 1 hr | Yield: 4–6 servings

No need to travel to Italy to taste authentic Italian cuisine.

Darn it.

STEAM

STIR

SERVE